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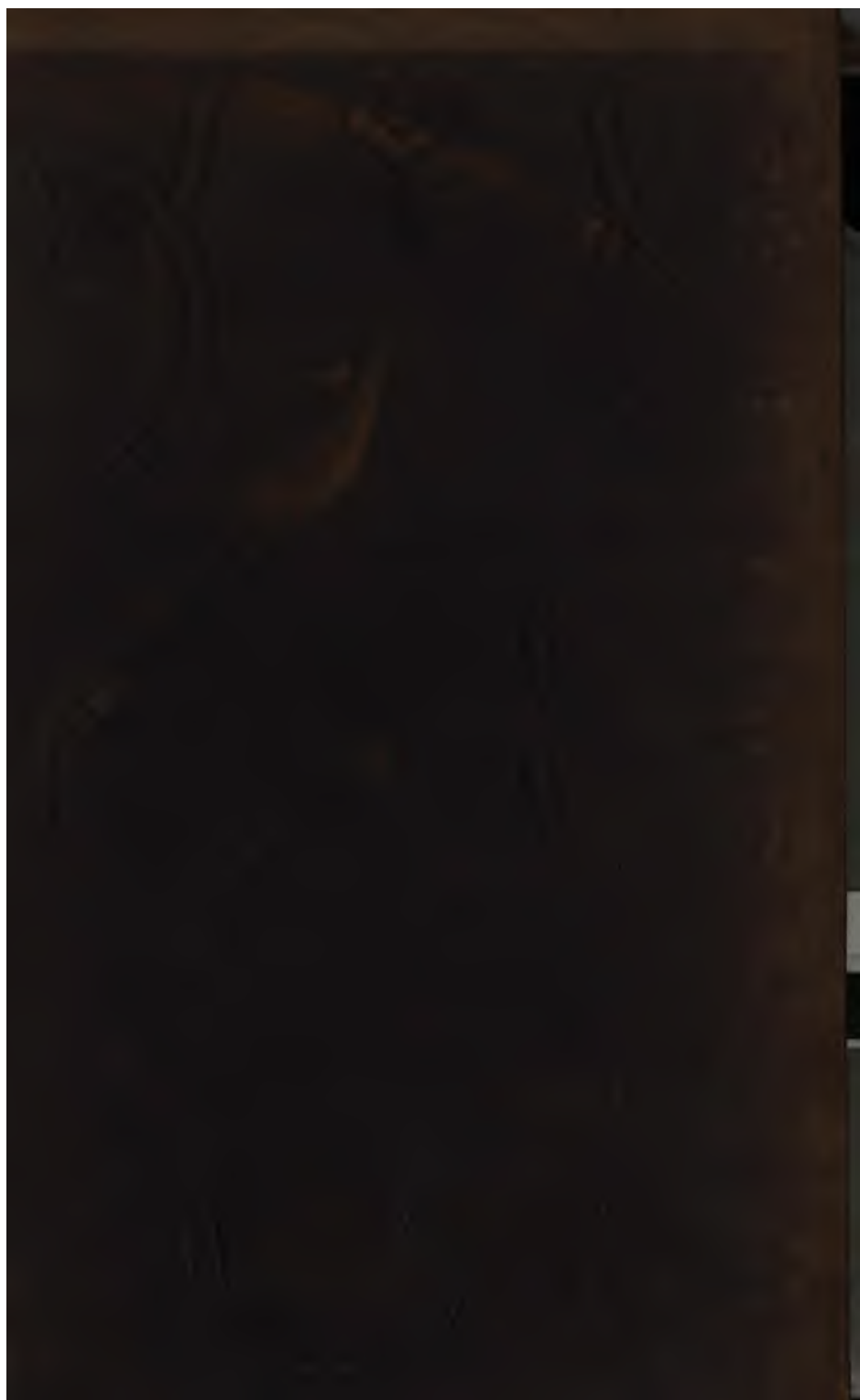
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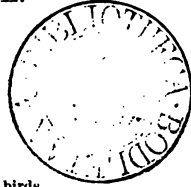
A D È L E.

ADÈLE.

A TALE OF FRANCE.

BY

MISS E. RANDALL.



" The land is full of blood : her savage birds
O'er human carcasses do scream and batten :
The silent hamlet smokes not : in the field,
The aged grandsire turns the joyless soil ;
Dark spirits are abroad ; and gentle worth,
Within the narrow house of death, is laid
An early tenant."

JOANNA BAILLIE.

LONDON :
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1838.

488.

TO MY MOTHER.

To whom can I so appropriately Dedicate this first effort of my pen, as to you, my beloved Mother, whose unceasing care and tenderness merit, indeed, a far more perfect tribute than any I can hope to offer. Should I be so happy as to win, for my little Work, a favourable reception, the gratification which my success will afford you, and your approval of my humble efforts, will constitute my sweetest—my most valued reward; as, on the other hand, should I be less fortunate than your partiality may desire, my best consolation will be derived from the belief, that while your judgment may condemn, your affection will still receive my unworthy offering, not in consideration of its merits, but as a token of the grateful and devoted attachment of

THE AUTHOR.

INTRODUCTION.

THE Writer, in complying with the usual custom of affixing an introduction to this, her first literary attempt, presumes not to anticipate criticism, or to bespeak any opinion of her Work, save that which would be authorized by its deserts alone. She is perfectly aware that the act of publishing a Book is a step, which, if not justified by at least some degree of interest in the production itself, no subsequent explanation can sanction. Were it otherwise, she is not unprovided with the apologies customary on these occasions, and she might plead on behalf of her production, the favourable opinion pronounced by one of the first and most philosophical writers of the day, as well as the probably too partial judgment of several literary friends; and to these, she might add (what has in fact, constituted her chief motive for publication)—her desire of complying with the wishes of those, to gratify whom, would afford her a higher satisfaction than any literary success could bestow. Abstaining, however, from all farther apologies, she feels, that in naming her Work as the production of youth and inexperience, she has stated sufficient to ensure that candid and impartial notice, which is all she could hope or desire for her first essay in Authorship.

CHAPTER I.

"The hour advances, the decisive hour
That lifts me to the summit of renown,
Or leaves me on the earth a breathless corse."

Edward the Black Prince.

THE month of September, 1789, was an eventful epoch for the young Alphonse de Clermont. It was the period to which he had long ardently looked forward, when the tried zeal and attachment of his family to the reigning house of Bourbon, would cause him to be enrolled a member of the King's Body Guard; and the appointment was accompanied by so many words of kindness and encouragement, both on the part of Louis XVI. and the Queen, that the young soldier's bosom swelled, and his heart bounded, as he enthusiastically took the oaths of duty and allegiance which his new station demanded. His father, the Count de Clermont, held a situation in the household of Louis XVI.; whom he served with all the devoted attachment, which that unfor-

tunate monarch ever inspired in those immediately about his person. Accustomed from his earliest years to behold his sovereign regarded with unbounded love and respect, the young and ardent mind of Alphonse inherited his father's loyal sentiments in all their fervour; and when at last his youthful dreams were realized, and he found himself placed among the defenders of the King, whom he had so long learned to venerate, he assumed the garb and duties of his new station, with an elevation of spirit, that made him pant for an active opportunity of proving his yet untried zeal in the good cause.

At the period in question, the Royal Family were at Versailles. Serious apprehensions had been entertained that the turbulent spirit, manifested by the populace of Paris would, ere long, burst forth in some violent attempt upon the person of the King; and it was, therefore, judged expedient to ensure his safety, by augmenting the number of troops already stationed near him. Accordingly, the Flanders regiment of Foot was ordered to reinforce the Guards at Versailles; where they arrived towards the end of September.

Alphonse de Clermont had just begun to accustom himself to his daily routine of duty, when the corps to which he belonged determined to greet the arrival of their companions in arms with a sumptuous entertainment, to be given in the great theatre at Versailles. No effort was neglected to render the fête as brilliant and harmonious as possible. The givers and their guests were placed, alternately, around

tables, ranged upon the stage. The boxes, filled with spectators, displayed groups of the young and the lovely; an exquisite band of musicians lent their enlivening strains; the laugh and the jest went round; and every heart, in the hilarity of the moment, seemed to have banished the remembrance of the fearful cause which had congregated so gorgeous an assembly in the little town of Versailles.

The festivity had reached its height, when a bustle at the end of the hall announced some new source of pleasure. In another moment, the attendants falling back on both sides, a line was formed, and the King, attended by Marie Antoinette, in all the exquisite grace and loveliness for which she was so remarkable, was seen entering the splendid saloon. The effect was electric: all rose. The band struck up the air, "*Oh Richard! oh, mon Roi!*" and one simultaneous shout of "*Vive le Roi!*" "*Vive la Reine!*" "*Vive le Dauphin!*" echoed, and re-echoed to the very roof. The Queen advanced, holding the Dauphin by the hand, and bowing with graceful dignity; and thus the royal party, followed by their suite, made the tour of the hall. When they had again reached its entrance door, Marie Antoinette turned once more to the assembly, her beautiful countenance, as yet, "unbleached by sorrow." Another shout rang through the walls, so loud and long, that its echoes had scarce died away, as she again reached the private apartments of the palace. As the evening advanced, the good cheer of the revellers produced still more

vociferous ebullitions of enthusiasm; and the day passed off with every demonstration of amity and good will. Ere many more had fled, how many of those voices were stilled in death! How awfully different were the sounds that reverberated through that festive banquet hall!

Alphonse de Clermont had accompanied his father from the theatre at a much earlier hour than many of his companions. He left the social scene with a light step and a bounding heart. The brilliancy of the spectacle, the novelty of his own situation, but above all, the unexpected appearance of the lovely Queen, who, (like her more prosperous mother Marie Thérèse,) seemed to have come in her hour of danger, to claim the support and protection of her faithful subjects,—all combined to elevate his soul! He felt as if, in such a cause, his single arm could be nerved to shield her from a host of enemies; and as he listened to the deafening acclamations with which her entrance was hailed, he fondly believed that the little band around him was invincible!

“How lovely is our Queen!” said he to his father, as they pursued their way homewards; “and how gracefully did she return our salutations. Where is the arm that could be raised against so good, so beautiful a being! and where the sword that would not leap from its scabbard in her defence? I wish,” he continued, his eye kindling with enthusiasm, “the filthy mob of Paris would fulfil the threat of coming hither, that we might teach them a useful lesson—or

rather, why should we not anticipate their march, and by thus quelling their seditious humour, quiet the apprehensions of our good Queen !”

The Comte shook his head. He was too deeply versed in the dark politics of the time to indulge the fallacious hope, that the many-headed Hydra of faction could be thus easily destroyed. He rather dreaded, lest the bursts of clamorous excitement, which he had just witnessed, should be but the heralds of a more fearful storm ; and he succeeded, like the lightning flash, by the fiery bolt that should shatter and sear all within its reach. Well aware that intemperate zeal might be as prejudicial to the King’s cause, as ill-timed caution, the Comte endeavoured to moderate the ardour of his son, by impressing him with the necessity for prudence, till the fitting moment should arrive for effectually employing more prompt and energetic measures.

De Clermont’s counsels fell upon no heedless ear. Alphonse garnered them in the best treasury of his heart’s remembrance ; and as he laid his head that night upon his pillow, he breathed a silent thanksgiving to Heaven, for having vouchsafed him such a monitor ; and an earnest prayer that his beloved parent might be preserved to him, unscathed through the dangers of the impending struggle.

On the 2nd of October, the fête above described was followed up by a breakfast, given by the Body Guards, at their hotel. The same manifestations of loyalty took place ; but on this occasion they

increased in vehemence, till at last it was proposed to march, at once, against the National Assembly. The project was, however, abandoned; and the fête finally terminated much in the same manner as that which had preceded.

Unfortunately, the circumstances attending these two entertainments furnished a pretext to the factious for hastening the dreadful scenes of the 5th and 6th of October. The populace of Paris, enraged at the scarcity of bread which prevailed, and still farther exasperated at a report, industriously spread abroad, that the Royal Family were preparing to take flight from Versailles, assembled, tumultuously, with the intention of hastening thither to intercept them. So little did the Royal Family apprehend this violent movement, that when the first notification of their approach reached Versailles, the King was hunting on the heights of Meudon, and Marie Antoinette was at her favourite retreat,—the Trianon. Alas! she then beheld it for the last time!

On the 5th of October, Alphonse de Clermont was on duty in the interior of the palace, where the greatest consternation and disorder prevailed. From the window near which he had placed himself, he could distinctly see all the preparations for defence. The Comte d'Estaing, who commanded the whole of the troops at Versailles, had stationed the mounted Body Guards in the *Place d'armes*, in advance of a body of the National Guard, commanded by a draper named Lecointre. This wretch, enraged that his

soldiers should be thus placed in the second line, endeavoured to raise a quarrel, by sending persons who slipped between the ranks of the soldiers, in order to annoy their horses. At the distance from which Alphonse was looking on in intense anxiety, the manœuvre was not discernible; he could only perceive that some movement was in agitation, without being able to distinguish with whom it originated. In order, if possible, to ascertain its cause, he sought eagerly among the crowd of horsemen for the figure of his father, who would, doubtless, be actively engaged in whatever was passing, and who was easily distinguishable from the rest by the noble grey charger on which he was mounted. Presently, several of the intruders were seen making a precipitate flight; and in another moment, Alphonse perceived his father wheel his horse suddenly round, and dart forward in pursuit of the fugitives. A few random shots instantaneously flew from among the ranks of the National Guard; one of which, pointed with unerring aim, lodged in the left arm of the Comte de Clermont. The mangled limb fell powerless by his side; and the high spirited animal he was riding, already at full gallop, thus suddenly freed from restraint, and terrified with the din behind him, darted onward with a velocity too fearful to look on, and was out of sight in a moment. With almost equal speed, Alphonse, following the first impulse of his terror and affection, abandoned his post, and flew

down the stairs of the palace, vainly hoping to overtake and succour his father.

In the hurry of the moment, he had forgotten that the grated doors of the castle, to which he had directed his course, were fastened; and on reaching them, perceived, to his extreme disappointment, that he must retrace his steps, in order to find some other outlet. The delay thus necessarily occasioned, gave him a few moments for consideration; during which he recollected with anguish, that to pursue his present purpose, would be to abandon his post in the first hour of danger, at the very moment when his royal patron stood most in need of his services. With the rapidity of lightning he regained the castle; and having found an attendant, gave him an imploring injunction to ascertain the fate of his father, and to return with the information as speedily as possible. Then, with a heart sickened at this first trial of conflicting duties, he re-mounted the stairs, placed himself once more at the window of the apartment which he had just quitted, and continued with his eyes strained upon the assembled troops beyond, in the fruitless hope of making some discovery to allay the anxiety with which he was tortured.

CHAPTER II.

“ Sedition, thou art up ; and in the ferment,
To what may not the madd'ning populace,
Gather'd together for they scarce know what,
Now loud proclaiming their late whisper'd griefs,
Be brought at length ?”

MEANWHILE, the infuriated rabble had set out from Paris. It was already dark, and the King was seated with his council in anxious deliberation, when the Aide-de-Camp of the Marquis de la Fayette arrived from Auteuil, half a league from Paris, with the intimation that he was on his march, followed by the whole of the National Guard, and a part of the population of Paris, who were coming to make remonstrances to the King. The notification was accompanied by an assurance to his Majesty, that no disorder would take place. Notwithstanding this tone of confidence, it is well known that de la Fayette was dragged to Versailles against his will ; and subsequent events proved that he had much miscalculated

the extent of his influence over the army. Some hours later, the General, having hastened forward, arrived in person, and by his reiterated assurances of safety, succeeded so far in allaying the fears of the King and Queen, that they were induced to retire to rest.

Alphonse de Clermont, who was on guard in the anti-chamber communicating with the Queen's apartments, had remained immovable at the window as long as day-light lasted, in the hope of descrying the return of the messenger whom he had sent in quest of his father. But the day waned without bringing any alleviation to his anxiety; and when at last night closed in, and he became aware that egress or ingress to the castle was no longer possible, he was forced to abandon the hope of receiving any tidings that night, and to surrender himself to all the tortures of suspense. He continued pacing up and down the apartment in a state of mind rendered still more painful by the uncertainty which, he now foresaw, overhung the issue of the possibly impending conflict. The misfortune of the morning striking directly upon the warm affections of his own heart, had considerably abated the ardour of his enthusiastic confidence; he still, indeed, did not doubt on which side victory would preponderate, should a contest take place; but he now saw the probability of its being purchased only with a severe struggle. Still, from the very circumstances of danger in which he was placed, he contrived to extract some consolation;

and even while dwelling most anxiously on the uncertainty in which the fate of his father was involved, his gallant spirit rose as he reflected on the extreme importance, as well as danger of the post which it had fallen to his lot to defend.

At two o'clock in the morning, the unhappy Queen, (against whom the whole rage of the populace was directed,) worn out with the anxiety and fatigues of the day, went to bed, and fell into a profound sleep. Re-assured by the confident promises of Monsieur de la Fayette, (who was himself grievously deceived,) and believing that for that night, at least, nothing was to be apprehended, she had, with considerate kindness, dismissed her two women in waiting, desiring them to lie down and snatch a few moments of repose. Happily the attachment of these ladies prompted them to disobey her, and instead of retiring to rest, they placed themselves at the door of her Majesty's apartment, and calling their two *femmes de chambre* to bear them company, they prepared to watch through the night.

The day was just beginning to dawn, when an infuriate multitude of banditti, their passions inflamed with intoxication, armed with pikes and bludgeons, and some of them with sabres and muskets, forced the barriers, made good their passage across the court-yard of the Princes, and rushed furiously forward to the marble staircase, which conducted to the apartments of the Royal Family. It

was the same by which Alphonse de Clermont had ascended but a few hours before.

In compliance with the King's previous command to make no resistance, the horde of assassins were permitted to pass almost unmolested through the Queen's guard-room, and in consequence reached, without opposition, the door of the ante-chamber, at which Alphonse de Clermont was on guard, and which communicated immediately with her Majesty's sleeping apartment. Aware of the murderous intentions of the mob, and convinced that the only chance of saving the Queen's life depended on the momentary check himself and his single companion could oppose to the further progress of the assassins, the two faithful guards resolved to disobey the King's unfortunate command, and, by selling their lives as dearly as possible, to afford the Queen a moment for escape. The door was speedily forced, and the only barrier they could then oppose to the passage of the murderers, was by holding their muskets firmly across the open doorway with one hand, while with the other they endeavoured to repel the attacks of their assailants. Reckless of life, rendered desperate by the horrors of the moment, and dreading lest their resistance should not hold out till the Queen could have effected her escape, they continued, with dauntless courage, to receive and return the blows of the ruffians. But the combat was too unequal to be of long continuance. M. de Repaire, finding his strength

gone, and himself on the point of sinking, raised his musket, and discharging it, as a last effort, into the very midst of the mob, fell to the ground pierced with innumerable wounds! Alphonse was now left alone at his perilous post: faint from loss of blood, and obliged to redouble his efforts since the fall of his companion, he continued holding his musket across the doorway with a desperate grasp, which (he perceived with agony) was every moment becoming more and more feeble. Meanwhile, the ladies who had remained at the door of the Queen's bed-chamber, had been alarmed by the horrible yells, and the discharge of fire-arms. One of them ran in to awaken the Queen; another flew to the spot whence the tumult proceeded, and opening the door of the ante-chamber, she beheld at its opposite entrance Alphonse de Clermont, covered with blood, and faintly endeavouring to defend it against the furious rabble. As she did so, he turned his head quickly round, and elevating his voice, so as to be heard above the yells and imprecations of the multitude, he vociferated, "Save the Queen, Madame; they are come to assassinate her!" In another instant the door was bolted at the inside. Alphonse had saved his Queen—but he knew it not! At the moment of uttering the words which told her danger, he had turned his head, and a ruffian, taking advantage of the movement, dealt him a furious blow with an upraised bludgeon, which laid him lifeless on the ground, weltering in his blood. All obstacle thus removed, the horde rushed tumultuously

in. In their eager haste the foremost fell, and thus defeating their own purpose, afforded a moment to the terrified attendants of the Queen to barricade the doors with trunks and chairs in the best manner they were able.

Marie Antionette, exhausted by the fatigues of the preceding day, had found in sleep a temporary oblivion from her misfortunes, when she was suddenly awakened by the almost frantic voices of her waiting women. They had just time to throw a petticoat over her night dress, and to conduct her into the toilet closet, in which was a door communicating with the King's apartments. It had never before been fastened, but on her side; but on this fatal night, by some strange mischance, (or evil design,) they found on reaching it, that it was secured from without. Exerting the united strength of their voices, they screamed violently for help, in the hope of being heard by some of the attendants beyond; but for several agonizing minutes, their utmost endeavours proved fruitless. A few bars and bolts now alone separated them from their pursuers, whose shouts of triumphant fury seemed every instant to approach nearer and nearer. Great God! what a moment! A barred door on one side—ruthless assassins on the other; the hapless Queen almost fainting in their arms—the impossibility of escape or concealment—the darkness of the hour—and the hideous yells of the multitude—all combined to render their situation one of agony—of despair! At

last, to their indescribable relief, they heard the bolt withdrawn, and passing through, in another instant it was re-fastened behind them. The Queen, borne onwards by her ladies with the utmost speed they could command, was just able to reach the apartment of the King, when, overcome with terror, she fell senseless in his arms !

CHAPTER III.

“Welcome, my son ! Here set him down, my friends,
Full in my sight ; that I may view at leisure
The bloody corse, and count those glorious wounds,
How beautiful is death, when earned by virtue !
Who would not be that youth ! What pity is it
That we can die but once, to serve our country !”

Cato.

WHEN the Count de Clermont found himself borne onwards in the fearful manner we have described, and felt that he had lost all power to restrain the impetuosity of his fiery steed, he at once perceived that his only chance of safety consisted in the small probability of being able to retain his seat, till some chance circumstance might check the farther progress of the animal. A few minutes sufficed to convince him that this would be no easy matter ; for his wound bled profusely, and a faint dizziness was beginning to overpower him, when he remarked that his horse was directing its course towards his

own stable. While it darted forward with unabated speed, the Count made a desperate effort to collect his scattered senses, till the animal, turning sharply into the court-yard, dashed up to the stable door, stopping with so sudden and violent a movement, that de Clermont was thrown with considerable force to the ground. He was carried in a state of insensibility to his chamber, and a surgeon was instantly sent for, who recalled him to animation, and examined his wound, which he pronounced to be serious, but not mortal. He then administered an opiate, and left the Count to repose.

De Clermont fell almost immediately into a deep sleep, which continued through all the weary hours in which Alphonse had endured such anxiety on his account. During the death-struggle that ensued, in which his son bore so conspicuous a part, De Clermont still slept. It was only as the day began to break, that he was able to cast off the stupor into which the composing draught had lulled him; and even then it was with senses scarcely less confused than the night before. Awakened to a remembrance of passing events by the horrible tumult without, he rang his bell violently to ascertain the cause. Terror kept all on the alert, and in an instant his old valet hurried into the apartment.

"For Heaven's sake, le Clerc, what has happened," said the Count, "how long have I slept, and wherefore is this frightful uproar?"

"Oh! my master, my dear master;" said the old

man, his eyes filled with tears, partly in horror at the enormities he had seen committed by some miscreants beneath the very windows, partly in joy that his beloved lord was sheltered from their fury ; “ Oh ! my dear master, they are screaming for our good Queen’s life ; they are going to murder her ; ” and the old man wrung his hands in anguish.

“ Merciful Heaven,” exclaimed De Clermont ; “ is it come to this ? Reach me my dressing apparatus, Le Clerc, and order my charger to be saddled ; ” he added, anxiously, “ I will not be absent at a moment like this.”

“ Oh ! no, no, my dear, dear master,” exclaimed the faithful old creature, “ You must not—indeed you must not—venture forth, all weak and wounded as you are.”

De Clermont made a movement of impatience ; he sat up, with the intention of rising, but overpowered with weakness, and still heavy from the effects of his sleeping potion, he fell back exhausted on the pillow.

“ And my son,” he said, “ have you no intelligence of him ? ”

“ None ; ” answered Le Clerc, “ ’Tis now above an hour since the mob rushed past these windows towards the castle, and all communication with it has since been impossible ; ” and then, with the garrulity of age, and forgetful of the pain he was inflicting, the old man detailed the horrid threats and imprecations he had heard, interrupting his

narrative by frequent exclamations of terror, as some fresh burst of fury reached them, and by occasional cautious advances towards the window to peep through the closed shutter at what was passing without.

In this manner the time wore on, till De Clermont's medical attendant re-entered his chamber, from whom he hoped to receive some more connected account of the insurrection. His first enquiry was for the safety of the royal family. With inexpressible relief he heard the intelligence of their preservation; but the details that accompanied it, were little calculated to allay his apprehensions of the danger that still menaced them.

"And can you give me no tidings of my son?" said De Clermont in an anxious tone, when the physician had ended his recital; "he was on guard in the Queen's ante-chamber; the struggle there must surely have been severe."

The countenance of his companion fell;—he had purposely avoided this afflicting portion of the night's excesses. With an apprehension quickened by anxiety, De Clermont perceived both the change and the omission; and grasping his physician's hand, "My son has fallen," he said; and as he spoke, he looked earnestly up, as if to read the confirmation of his fears.

"Your son has preserved the life of his Queen," replied his physician; "but," he continued, after a

short pause, "he has purchased her existence only at the expense of his own."

"I thank you, Sir," said De Clermont, in a low calm tone, "You have told me that which should bring consolation to the heart of any father, for the bereavement of a son." He paused, then added, in a voice tremulous with emotion, "Even for such a son as was my Alphonse."

The Count sat for some minutes, his face covered with his hand, struggling to control his feelings. His son—his only—his noble son had fallen. But he had fallen gloriously—fallen in the service of his Sovereign—the very life of his Queen, had been the price, though not, alas! the reward of his self devotion! De Clermont felt that he must not—ought not, to lament the sacrifice; and by a strong effort he mastered his emotions sufficiently to listen calmly to whatever farther details his companion could communicate.

The events of that dreadful day are too well known to require more than a brief notice here. The populace, frustrated in their designs on the life of Marie Antoinette, determined to enforce the removal of the Royal Family from Versailles to the capital. They continued shouting, "*à Paris, à Paris,*" till Louis was, with some difficulty, induced to yield to their wishes, and to consent to accompany them thither with the Queen, in order to prevent any further excesses. The mob testified their savage joy by a general discharge of their muskets. The royal

carriages were prepared, and the procession commenced its march.

The Count de Clermont had been speedily informed by old Le Clerc of the projected movement, as well as of various circumstances which confirmed him in the belief that some further outrage was to be apprehended. "This arm can still wield a sword," he said inwardly; and determining, notwithstanding his weak state, not to be again absent from his post in the hour of danger, he ordered his horse to be in readiness, and feebly prepared to rise. It was in vain that the faithful old Le Clerc remonstrated at the rashness of such a proceeding. De Clermont would listen neither to his entreaties, nor to the persuasions of his medical attendant. "Think you, my friend," he said, with a ghastly smile, "that the life which yesterday I would joyfully have relinquished in defence of my Sovereign, has become less valueless since the bereavement of last night? I am already sufficiently recovered, and this is no moment for the indulgence of unnecessary repose."

The Count's feeble step contradicted the firmness of his voice. With Le Clerc's assistance he mounted his horse, and making his way through the least dense portion of the mob, was admitted into the court yard of the castle just in time to close into the procession, immediately behind the carriages which contained the family of his unfortunate Sovereign.

Who that has read the history of that awful procession, does not shudder at the remembrance! A

detachment of brigands bearing the heads of two murdered Body Guards, formed the advanced guard. The King's carriage was preceded by *poissardes* drunk with fury and wine, several of them astride on cannons, and roaring forth their Bacchanalian songs of triumph. Behind his Majesty's carriage were several of his faithful Guards, some on foot and some on horseback, most of them uncovered and unarmed, and worn out with hunger and fatigue. Clamour, singing, the frequent discharge of musketry, the smoke from which was sometimes so dense as to be almost suffocating; such were the sounds that accompanied the injured and excellent Louis and his hapless Queen, in their passage to the capital. So slow was the progress of the sad procession, that it did not reach Paris till seven o'clock in the evening. The King and Queen were first conducted to the Hotel de Ville, and from thence to the Tuileries, which they reached only at ten o'clock at night. De Clermont, having witnessed the safe arrival of the Royal Family at the Palace, turned his horse's head towards his own hotel. Faint and weary, he entered his now desolated mansion, where, casting himself upon a bed, he gave way to the hitherto smothered anguish of his feelings, till worn out with the fatigues of the day, the afflicted father found in sleep the repose he so greatly needed.

CHAPTER IV.

“ O, woman ! in our hours of ease,
Uncertain, coy, and hard to please,
And variable as the shade
By the light quivering aspen made ;
When pain and anguish wring the brow,
A ministering angel thou ! ”

Scott's Marmion.

THE general voice of commiserating sympathy contributed, in a great degree, to confirm the universal belief, that the two faithful Body Guards, left in charge of the Queen's ante-chamber, had fallen self-devoted victims to their duty and attachment. It was certainly by no means the intention of their assailants to show any mercy to the Queen's preservers ; but probably the blow which laid Alphonse de Clermont senseless on the ground, was the very means of preserving the life it was intended to destroy. Kicking his prostrate body aside, the abandoned horde tumbled and rushed tumultuously into the

apartment, heedless of ought beside the object of their pursuit. Finding their victim had fled, with eager haste they retraced their steps down the marble staircase, hoping to reach the other door of the Queen's chamber, so as to intercept her flight; and Alphonse and his companion were thus left senseless and solitary tenants of the now deserted ante-chamber. The windows, broken and shattered by repeated discharges of musketry, admitted the full tide of morning air upon the pallid features of the two young men. On one, its vivifying influence was no longer available; he slept his last long sleep—he had died the death of the brave! For several hours Alphonse remained almost as motionless as his unfortunate companion. The National Guard, who had taken possession of the Palace, immediately on the departure of the King for Paris, made it their first duty to examine the apartments in search of the dead and the dying. A surgeon who was in attendance, having ascertained that Alphonse still breathed, recalled him partly to consciousness; and he was then conveyed, in company with several of his wounded companions, to the infirmary of Versailles.

But the vengeance of the murderous banditti against the unfortunate Body Guards, had not yet exhausted itself. Hearing that several of them had been removed to the infirmary, a band of the brigands marched thither, and demanding to see the governor, insisted that their victims should be delivered up to

them. Monsieur Voisin received them in the entrance hall, and, with admirable presence of mind, humanity, and courage, (for the deception was practised at the hazard of his own life,) he assured them they had been misinformed, and invited them to partake of some refreshment that had opportunely been set before them. While the miscreants were loitering to drink, the governor seized a moment to convey a secret order to the good Sisters attached to the establishment. The Body Guards were hastily carried from their beds, attired in the clothes usually worn by the infirm patients, placed in the pauper's ward, and their own beds re-made. With such alacrity did the good *Sœurs de Charité* perform their task, that the miscreants, finding in their search only what they conceived to be sick poor, departed, to join their companions in the procession to Paris.

Let me here pause a moment, while I pay a well-merited tribute of admiration to the moral loveliness of this truly noble sisterhood. Unbound by those vows which constrain many other religious orders to the austerities of a convent,

“The world forgetting, by the world forgot!”

the Sisters of Charity remain denizens of that world in which toil, watching, privation, and self-denial, are alone their voluntary portion. The abode of poverty, the house of mourning, the loathsome chamber of disease—these are *their* palaces. To heal the sick—to soothe the afflicted—to console the broken-hearted—such are their chosen avocations.

Their reward—oh! surely, even in this life, the consciousness of *such* benefits conferred, must bring with it a more exquisite,—aye, a hundred-fold more exquisite enjoyment, than all the pomps of pleasure, or the refinements of luxury! In another, and a better, how ineffable will be the bliss,—the brightness—of that pure spirit that can robe itself, while here, in heroic virtues like these!

The writer is slightly acquainted with the family of a lady, who, born to the possession of those enjoyments that wealth, family, and situation can bestow, has relinquished all their attractions, to assume the mild duties of a *Sœur de Charité* in a remote village in Ireland! Her modesty would shrink from the mention of her name here, nor could this humble tribute of praise ever reach her lowly dwelling. But should it meet the eye of any of those relatives, who are mixing in the great and the gay world which *she* has abandoned, it may perchance afford them a passing gratification to know, that the noble yet unassuming virtues of *their* “Sister of Charity” are remembered with respect and admiration even in a distant land!

Had care and kindness alone been required to ensure the restoration of Alphonse de Clermont, his recovery would not long have remained doubtful. All the sympathy and solicitude which his debilitated state demanded, were lavished on him by his kind preservers; but for a considerable time it appeared little likely that their generous efforts would be crowned with success. When Alphonse was first

recalled to animation, he awoke indeed to life, but not to consciousness. His imagination, filled with the horrible scene in which he had lately been a sharer, seemed to have lost all other remembrance. He fancied himself still engaged in the deadly strife, and in the paroxysms of his delirium was perpetually shouting, with the most fearful vehemence, "Save the Queen, Madame, they are come to assassinate her!" And when at last the violence of the fever did subside, it was only to give place to a state of mental apathy scarcely less painful to contemplate. Nearly a month had elapsed ere the mind of Alphonse in any degree regained its healthy tone. Then reason once more dawned; and by degrees the full light of recollection beamed on his hitherto-benighted memory. In hurried accents he asked the issue of the contest; and in still greater agitation enquired for his father. They could only inform him that the Count de Clermont, though wounded, had been sufficiently recovered to accompany the King to Paris; and Alphonse imagining that his father had been apprized of his safety, judging that at such a crisis every moment must be fully occupied, and, unaware of the length of time that had elapsed since the fatal 5th of October, expressed no surprise at not seeing his father by his sick couch.

The afflicted parent was in fact still in ignorance of his son's existence. Himself stretched on a bed of sickness, he had been certainly informed that Alphonse had perished; and the belief was still

further confirmed, by the assiduous care with which the retreat of the Body Guard was concealed, lest the banditti, discovering the deception that had been practised on them, should return to wreak their fury upon the sheltered inmates of the infirmary. Thus, while De Clermont was mourning the supposed untimely fate of his son, Alphonse believed his father to be actively engaged in the urgent affairs of the moment. Father and son both were deceived; but the delusion was soon to be dispelled—to one, how sadly so!

The first request that accompanied the return of Alphonse to consciousness, was for permission to write to his father. Sister Angélique penned a letter from his dictation; with some difficulty he affixed his signature, and then began to count the hours that must elapse ere he could receive the answer.

Within the expected time the messenger returned; but the intelligence he brought was of so alarming a nature, that it was judged expedient to withhold it from Alphonse in his present enfeebled state. Upon reaching the hotel of the Comte de Clermont, in the Rue St. Honoré, the bearer of his son's letter was surprized to find it closed, and still more so, when, upon knocking for admittance, he observed the old porter peep cautiously forth, ere he ventured to unfasten the *porte cochère*. Exclamations of surprize and joy broke from the old man's lips, when he first learned the news of his young lord's restoration; but

these quickly gave place to sorrowful expressions of regret at the only intelligence he was able to impart, in answer to the anxious enquiries from Versailles. "Two nights previously," he said, "the Comte, who had been able to leave his chamber only once since his return to Paris, had been suddenly arrested during the night, and carried to the prison of the Abbaye." His information extended no further. All access to the prison was strictly prohibited, and old Le Clerc alone had been permitted to accompany his master. Rumour had, indeed, assigned a not improbable cause for the Count's arrest; but so little faith could be placed in the voice of public report, which in those times was more frequently raised in malice than in truth, that the whole affair, as well as its probable consequences, were alike involved in mystery. One thing alone seemed certain:—that De Clermont's imprisonment must necessarily be attended with danger to himself. His known attachment to the Royal Family had rendered him an object of distrust and hatred to the revolutionary party; and once marked as their victim, it could scarcely be doubted, that in the highly excited state of public feeling, but a few steps would intervene between the accusation and the scaffold. The old porter willingly undertook to use every effort to convey to his master the letter, which he knew would bring the most healing balm to De Clermont's sufferings; and should he even fail of doing so, he

still hoped, through the agency of Le Clerc, to communicate the glad tidings of his dear young master's safety. Instead of the joyous and welcome greeting of a beloved father, such was the only reply to Alphonse de Clermont's anxious and affectionate letter.

CHAPTER V.

"Heav'n knows, for me, I value life so little,
That I would spend it as an idle breath,
To serve my king, my country; nay, my friend.
But sure the voice of Heav'n and cry of nature
Are loud against the sacrifice of thousands
To giddy rashness."

Edward the Black Prince.

"'Tis the last blaze of life, nature revives,
Like a dim winking lamp, that flashes brightly
With parting light, and straight is dark for ever."

Tamerlane.

THE excesses of the 5th and 6th of October, were but the prelude to a series of events scarcely less calamitous in their consequences. Since his forced journey to Paris, the King had become virtually a prisoner in his own capital; hemmed in by contending factions, and encircled by a tumultuous rabble, ready to proceed to any violence at the smallest infraction of their supposed rights. The day following the arrival of the royal family, their

faithful Body Guards were dismissed, and the posts of the palace filled up with the newly-created National Guard. These were, indeed, commanded by the noble-minded De la Fayette; but the small power which he possessed to restrain their insubordination, or enforce their support in case of any tumult, had been but too lately made manifest. De la Fayette was, in fact, too single-hearted himself, to hold the reigns over so mighty a mass of passion and prejudice. Ever actuated by principles of the purest patriotism—by feelings of the most benevolent disinterestedness, he judged all men by the standard of his own highly-formed mind, and vainly hoped with such weapons to stem the torrent of popular discontent. The unfortunate King was left, therefore, defenceless—a mere puppet in the hands of his ungrateful people. To free him from this state of durance, and to place him with his family in safety, until the public mind should have regained a somewhat more healthful tone, the royalists determined to make a decisive effort. The Count de Clermont strenuously opposed the undertaking with all the arguments which his judgment and foresight could suggest; but, perceiving that his reasons were borne down by the more sanguine expectations of his companions, and unwilling to withhold his support from an enterprize, the success of which he scarce dared to anticipate, he at length acquiesced in the scheme of the royalists, who proposed to carry off the royal family to Peronne, having first secretly endea-

voured to collect an army of thirty thousand men, to ensure the success of the enterprize. Unfortunately, the Marquis de Favras, with whom the plot originated, was actuated more by zeal than by prudence. Numerous agents were necessarily employed in procuring the men and monies required; in all of these the utmost secrecy and circumspection would have been indispensable, and Monsieur de Favras was unhappily no way calculated for directing so dangerous and complicated a machine. He was betrayed either by his own indiscretion, or by the treachery of a confederate; and on the night of the 11th of December, himself and Madame de Favras were suddenly arrested, and conveyed to the prison of the Châtelet.

On the same night, the Count de Clermont was torn from the sick bed on which he lay in a state of bodily suffering and mental anguish, and removed a prisoner to the Abbaye. There, in a wretched apartment, chill from damp and the inclemency of the season, sick in body, and oppressed in mind, De Clermont had full leisure for the bitterness of his reflections. Keenly did he now deplore that his prudent counsels had been unheeded; for he had no difficulty in guessing the cause of his incarceration, to the probable consequences of which he, however, looked forward with calmness and resignation. As he dwelt on his own impending fate, he was enabled to contemplate that of his noble son, with feelings in which a father's pride was mingled

with gratitude towards heaven, that had, in its mercy, spared his Alphonse so bitter a trial. The anguish of bereavement passed away, in the prospect of a speedy and happy reunion. One lingering desire of life—one solitary regret at relinquishing it, alone remained. It had its source in the ardent, the unquenchable desire of still serving his king and country! It was the spring from whence all his actions flowed; and De Clermont felt and knew that in no bosom was the fountain more pure than in his own. From the affectionate attentions of the faithful Le Clerc, the Count derived some mitigation of his captivity. Through his old valet, he learnt the fate of his unfortunate friend, and heard with satisfaction that de Favras had encountered it with heroic courage and coolness. For what reason his own trial had been deferred, De Clermont could not divine. He was still kept in the closest confinement; but no proceedings had as yet been commenced against him.

It was on the third morning after the execution of his unfortunate friend, that the Governor of the Abbaye entered his apartment, and De Clermont feebly raised his now emaciated form to receive the expected announcement. Old Le Clerc had ushered the visitor in with much solemnity, and now lingered in anxious expectation of the forthcoming communication.

“I am happy in being able to convey more pleasurable intelligence than I had ventured to hope,”

said the Governor, after a brief salutation ; “ Monsieur de Clermont,—you are free.”

“ Eh heugh !” screamed old Le Clerc, at the joyous intelligence, at the same time performing the most elaborate pirouette his old limbs could accomplish ; then bursting forth into the chorus of a lively French air, he capered about the apartment, snapping his fingers, with the most unseemly disrespect for the presence of the Governor.

“ Quit the room, Le Clerc,” said his master ; and with a step somewhat subdued by the calmness of De Clermont’s voice, the old man obeyed.

“ Am I to understand,” said the Count, when his servant had left the apartment, “ that I am no longer a prisoner ?”

“ Certainly.”

“ I am at liberty, then, to depart from this place to my own house ?”

“ Assuredly so.” The Governor paused a moment. “ May I be permitted,” he continued, “ to express the hope that Monsieur de Clermont will in future be less prodigal of life, in endeavours that can but end in disappointment. I should foresee with deep regret the result of a second entrance within these walls.”

De Clermont understood the hint, and felt the kindness by which it was dictated. Eloquently he expressed his thanks ; and after mutual expressions of good will, the Governor rose to take his leave, while De Clermont called Le Clerc to make prepara-

tions for their departure. In less than an hour both were once more on their way to the Rue St. Honoré, in equal amazement at so unexpected a release. The mystery might have been easily solved. A victim had been called for by the popular fury—De Favras had been offered up—for the moment, excitement and curiosity were appeased, and De Clermont was forgotten. The moment had not yet arrived, when the demons of faction should demand whole hecatombs of human sacrifices!

It will readily be believed, that when the Count de Clermont reached his own hotel, its gates flew open at his approach, and "every face was dressed in smiles to meet" him. Scarcely had his carriage rolled into the court-yard, when his domestics thronged around, and many a tear glistened in the eyes that now gazed with sorrowful earnestness upon the change which so short an absence had wrought in the appearance of their beloved master. Wan and haggard, the once fine features of the Count de Clermont were now scarcely recognizable. His weary ride to Paris, on the day immediately succeeding that on which he had received his wound, had brought on an attack of fever, the violence of which was augmented by the supposed death of his son. In this state of physical and moral suffering, had De Clermont been torn from his bed through the inclemency of a December night, to the damp and cheerless tenantry of a prison,—pale, attenuated, and exhausted by his passage from the Abbaye to

his own home, he seemed now scarce able to return, or even notice the salutations of his household. The carriage door was opened, and De Clermont was preparing feebly to alight, as the old porter who had that moment returned from one of his oft-renewed attempts to convey the letter of Alphonse to his father, made his way through the crowd, holding it on high.

“Let me pass, let me pass,” he cried; “our master come back—Monsieur Alphonse safe and well, and he not to know it!” and pressing onwards he held forth the letter, at the moment the Comte was descending from his carriage. Unable to comprehend the incoherent words and gestures of his servant, De Clermont tore the letter open. His eyes rested on the well-known signature of his son—the blessed truth flashed upon his mind; but the shock was too great for his already sinking frame, and the next moment the Comte fell senseless into the arms of his attendants. The same physician who at Versailles had conveyed to him the intelligence of his son’s death, was speedily in attendance, and De Clermont, in a brief space restored to consciousness and composure, had penned the following few lines to his restored son.

“My beloved! my more than ever beloved son!—

“Do I then dream? or art thou indeed restored
“to me? Thou, whom I have mourned as one dead—
“Thou, over whose brief, but glorious existence, thy

“father hath poured forth the most bitter tears, that
“earthly sorrow hath yet wrung from his heart ! But
“the trial is passed ; its anguish is forgotten, in the
“pride and joy with which I shall behold thee. I
“am feeble, Alphonse, and unable to write more—
“for sorrow, sickness, and captivity, have each and
“all assailed me. But come to me, my son—to em-
“brace, to bless thee once more, can alone restore
“thy affectionate Father !”

When the Comte de Clermont's message reached Versailles, Alphonse was beginning to suspect the deception which the prudence of his attendants had induced them to adopt. Concealment now was no longer necessary. The kind governor placed his father's letter in his hand, and Alphonse, after reiterated expressions of thanks to his generous friends, found himself, within an hour, in his father's carriage, on the road to Paris. Towards evening he reached the Hotel Clermont—another moment, and father and son were locked in each other's arms. In the first instant of intense feeling, neither had time to mark the countenance of the other. But as they withdrew from their first embrace, each gazed on each, and the ravages of sickness and sorrow became awfully apparent. It was, however, with far different feelings, that the re-united parent and child now looked upon each other. De Clermont contemplated the pale cheek of his son, with a gleam of pride and pleasure. He knew that its bright hues

of health and beauty would return ; he felt that the step, which was now languid and drooping, would ere long resume its youthful vigour and elasticity. But as Alphonse gazed upon the wan features and wasted form of his father ; and as he listened to the hollow tones of his voice, he perceived, but too surely, that the eyes which were now bent upon him, in all the warmth of a father's love, would soon be closed for ever ; and with a heavy sigh, he turned aside to conceal the bitterness of his emotions !

From that hour Alphonse became his father's constant attendant. With untiring affection, he watched beside the sick couch of the invalid. *His* hand administered every medicine—*his* arm was ever ready to support the weary or unquiet pillow. For weeks did Alphonse pursue his delicious, yet agonizing task. It was now January. The trees were just beginning to wear their first tinge of green, in promise of an early spring ; and from hope's own season, one faint beam was reflected upon the sad heart of Alphonse de Clermont. As he watched beside the couch of his slumbering parent, and gazed upon the solitary lamp, whose flickering light alone illumined the sick chamber, his mind involuntarily wandered back to the events of the last twelve months—He had seen the fortress of the Bastille—the dungeon of despotism—levelled with the dark waters. The aristocracy of his country—the clergy of his religion, had been alike stripped of the titles and privileges, conceded to them by the

consenting voice of ages. He beheld the virtuous Sovereigns of a brave and chivalrous people, dragged, by the unbridled license of a furious rabble, almost defenceless, prisoners to their capital. To himself, individually, how checquered too had been the scene ! But a few short months had passed away, since he had entered upon life's career, high in hope, health, and happiness ! What now were the remembrances of the past—the feelings of the present—the anticipations of the future ? All alike, melancholy, anxious, and foreboding ! As he dwelt upon his own onward prospects, his eyes rested upon the beloved countenance of his father. There was a slight movement perceptible. With noiseless step Alphonse approached the bed, and at the moment De Clermont woke.

“ Still watching, my Alphonse ? ” he said, with a grateful smile. “ And yet, my son, not all thy care can help me through this struggle. I would fain have been spared yet a little while to thee and to my country ; but I feel that God has willed it otherwise. It is a fearful moment, Alphonse, in which thy bark of life hath been launched upon the wide ocean of politics, and many more experienced than thou, will abandon the helm of conscience and of principle, only to find shipwreck in the storm. Danger and temptation will beset thy path, and the road to duty may become difficult and painful. But, oh ! my son ! remember, that thy duty to thy King, is second only to that thou owest to thy God ! Remember, that he

whom thou hast sworn to serve on earth, is the chosen Vice-gerent of the King of Kings; and that, in relinquishing thy best interests, thy dearest affections, for the good of thy King and country, thou wilt offer the best—the most acceptable sacrifice to Heaven!”

The Comte had spoken in a low, but clear tone. He now paused in exhaustion. Alphonse knelt by the bedside, the emaciated hand of his father clasped within his own.

“Oh! my father,” he fervently exclaimed, “may Heaven hear me, as I swear to remember—may Heaven help me as I strive to fulfil, thy counsels!”

Raising the hand he still held, he pressed it to his heart, then silently placed it upon his own head. De Clermont understood the unspoken wish. In a low, but clear voice, he pronounced a father’s benediction. It was the last effort of expiring nature. De Clermont’s hand still rested upon the head of his son—but the noble heart that animated it had ceased to beat!

CHAPTER VI.

“ And what is death,
That dreadful evil to a guilty mind,
And awe of coward natures? ’Tis but rest,—
Rest that should follow every arduous toil,
Relieve the valiant, and reward the good :
Nor is there aught in death to make it dreadful,
When fame is once established.”

Edward the Black Prince.

WHO that has watched beside the sick—the dying couch of a beloved being—does not remember the dreary desolate blank that succeeds the moment of dissolution? While life remains, hope *will* linger. From the ark of its affection, the heart still sends forth the dove, over the wide waste of affliction, fondly dreaming that she will return with the olive-branch of peace and joy. The mind too—fully occupied in the duties of the sick chamber—has scarcely leisure to dwell on aught beside. To smoothe the pillow—to watch over the unquiet slumber—to sweeten the bitter draught with

affection's hand—to read the languid eye—and anticipate the unspoken wish; these, and a thousand other kindly offices, fill up the weary hours, and twine the loved-one, in its helplessness, closer and closer round the heart. But when the last scene has closed on the being we have so loved and tended—when the warm heart can no longer feel our care—nor the beaming eye smile its thanks—then it is, that the weary frame, and the crushed spirit, sink together in utter, hopeless loneliness. Beyond that now-silent chamber, the wide world appears one trackless waste; and, as we gaze on the still, cold features of the departed, we long for the wings of the dove to “flee away, and be at rest!”

Alphonse de Clermont still knelt by the bedside of his father, absorbed in the first speechless, stunning consciousness of bereavement. No sound broke the awful stillness of the chamber of death, save the low, dull, measured, ticking of the time-piece, marking its accustomed round. Presently it struck. The clear, silver bell, smote upon the heart of Alphonse. It was the first hour of his father's passage into eternity! Again a little while, and morning dawned. The sickly light of the solitary night lamp waxed more dim, then emitted one bright glare, and sunk extinguished in its socket—even as life had done! Slowly Alphonse arose from his kneeling posture. He could neither weep nor pray. Sensation seemed benumbed—the flood gates of sorrow were pent up—closed—enchained! With slow and lingering

steps he quitted his father's chamber and sought his own. As he entered it, the bright beams of the morning sun flung their full radiance upon every object, as if in mockery of his sorrow; and Alphonse, in the first bitterness of awakened feeling, cast himself upon his bed—and wept!

I have often thought that many of the customs of France, those especially belonging to the last duties which affection can pay to the departed, are fraught with the deepest—the most thrilling pathos. It is usual on such occasions, for the remains of the deceased to be placed beneath his own arched and open gateway, surrounded and covered with the insignia of death. There, for the last time, on the threshold of their earthly tenement, the inanimate relics of mortality receive the passing prayer of piety, or the sorrowful farewell of humble friendship! It was thus, that on the third day after that on which the Comte de Clermont had breathed his last, he reposed in solemn state in the hall of his ancestors. Around him were the pomp and pageantry of earth; but the incense that sanctified them, was the poor man's prayer, the tears and the blessings of the widow and the orphan. To all, De Clermont had been a kind and generous benefactor; and now, *like the perfume of the flower we have watered*, the grateful incense of their orisons rose upwards in its holy fragrance, even to the foot of Mercy's throne!

The following day was fixed for the interment. The voluntary tribute to the rank, as well as virtues

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of the deceased, manifested itself in the length of the mournful procession. The funeral service was performed in the neighbouring church of St. Roch ; and from thence, the melancholy cortège moved on in all the awful pomp of a military interment. On the bier lay the helmet and sword of the deceased ; the mourners followed immediately behind ; and after them was led the grey charger that had so often borne its master gallantly to the field ; its long black housings trailing on the ground. Then came a detachment of soldiers, with arms reversed, and a long file of carriages closed the procession.

The roll of the muffled drum, and the measured tread of the soldiers, ceased together as they reached the cemetery. The honoured remains were deposited in the tomb of the De Clermonts. Several distinct volleys of musquetry resounded among the cypress trees by which it was overshadowed. Their echoes died away,—the concourse departed ;—the brave, the virtuous Comte de Clermont reposed in his last lone home !

Alas ! how awful ! how agonizing is the chilling sense of desolation that pervades the house of mourning on that day, when the loved—the lost one has been removed from it for ever ! While the dear remains are still near,—while we are still permitted to gaze on the loved features—to imprint another, and another kiss upon the clay-cold lips—to bend in prayer beside the couch, where rests the earthly tabernacle of the dear departed,—fancy still cheats

us with the belief that we are not yet utterly forsaken. But, when the tomb has closed for ever over the object of our affection,—when the grave has, indeed, claimed its victory,—then it is that we feel the full loneliness of our bereavement, and that our trouble is, “indeed, greater than we can bear!” In that dreary mansion, how many remembrances are now awakened by every surrounding object! The hours of childhood,—the companionship of maturer years—words of kindness—tokens of affection, unheeded at the time, but dearly, oh! *how* dearly cherished now! These, and a thousand others, come thronging over the memory, in all the first unmitigated bitterness of desolation!

It was with such feelings that Alphonse de Clermont now re-entered his lonely chamber. The excitement, the necessity for exertion, which had accompanied the mournful ceremony of the morning, had passed away. *He was alone with memory!* Every familiar object on which he gazed, was fraught with painful associations, and called up a thousand recollections of the past. Gradually, the dim light, which found its way through the still closed shutters, was succeeded by the beautiful balmy hour of twilight; but its soothing influence was unfelt. Night closed in; but the darkness served only to augment the agony of Alphonse, as he listened to the bleak whistling of the wintry wind, and remembered that it swept over the tomb of his father! Then came sleep, and pleasing dreams,—images of the

past, and forgetfulness of the present; and then, the morning's wakening;—oh! that dreadful wakening to the first consciousness that all is over! When we arise, and behold the glorious light of day once more admitted through the now unclosed shutters of the house of mourning;—when we see the bright sunbeams glancing joyously on every object, in glaring, ghastly, mockery, and yet feel that we are desolate! Nor is it in the *first* moments of the heart's *first* affliction, that even the consolations of religion are appreciated. We must *learn* the task of resignation. In the school of sad experience only, can we find how “sweet are the uses of adversity!” And bitter, most bitter is the struggle by which such knowledge is acquired. Happy they, who, having past the appointed trial,—having gained the victory over human pride and human weakness, are enabled to bend before *His* throne who gave, and who hath taken away, and to say, in all lowliness of spirit, “Thy will be done!”

CHAPTER VII.

"Is she not more than painting can express,
Or youthful poets fancy, when they love?"

Fair Penitent.

It was a few days after that on which Alphonse de Clermont had followed the remains of his father to the tomb, that two females were seated in an apartment of the Fauxbourg St. Germain, at Paris. The rich, massive fashion of the period, was displayed in its interior decorations, whose costliness of material, and elegance of arrangement, denoted, at once, the wealth and good taste of its present occupants. The situation of the mansion had been chosen with no less judgment. From behind the rich folds of rose-coloured satin drapery, with which the windows were shaded, the eye rested upon that portion of the city of Paris, the view of which, taken as a whole, is, perhaps, unrivalled among the capitals of Europe. Looking across the river Seine, the spires and pinnacles of numerous churches, in the distance, stood

out in bold relief against the sky ; the music of their chimes borne through the clear atmosphere in sweetly softened harmony. In advance, stood the palace of the Tuileries, with the long façade of the Louvre ; the somewhat heavy architecture of which, was relieved by the adjoining beautiful gardens of the Tuileries, rich in grand and varied foliage, and redolent with sweets. To the right, arose the venerable turrets of the cathedral of Notre Dame ; and immediately in the foreground, the Seine, with its bridges and its bustle, flowed through the very centre of the French metropolis ; its waters covered with small craft of every kind, both for pleasure and traffic, and its banks thronged with an ever-changing crowd of all ranks and all nations.

The elder of the two ladies who occupied the apartment above alluded to, had already reached the meridian of life ; but time had lightly touched her still handsome features, leaving only in its full perfection, their beautiful and benevolent expression,—that mirror of the mind within,—in which was mingled a high tone of thought and feeling, indicating no common degree of mental superiority. Her companion was a girl, in the first bloom of youthful loveliness, on whom neither time nor sorrow had, as yet, left a trace. Her eyes, of the deepest blue, were shaded by long black lashes, and round a brow of marble whiteness, hung thick clusters of dark brown hair, whose glossy ringlets were suffered to retain their own rich hue, instead of being powdered, according to the almost

universal fashion of the day. Her form, which just reached the middle size, was, perhaps, less remarkable for the perfect symmetry of its rounded proportions, than for that nameless grace which pervaded every—even the lightest action, and which gives to womanly loveliness a charm that mere beauty alone can never impart. In looking on that fair young creature on whose lip the smiles of hope and joy still played, and in whose eye still danced the heart's young happiness in all its first freshness, you almost ceased to recollect that she was beautiful, and remembered only that she was formed to be beloved. She now bent over an embroidery frame, in the endeavour to imitate the form and shading of a natural rose, which stood placed on a small table beside her. It was, however, evident that the thoughts and fingers of the fair sempstress were variously employed, for she frequently raised her eyes from the work before her, and turned them towards the window near which she was seated.

“I am afraid after all,” she at last said, “I cannot finish those rose-buds to-day, the light is so fast fading; and yet,” she continued, re-seating herself, “it were pity to leave them, for to-morrow my flowers will be withered !”

But it seemed that those rose-buds were destined to remain uncompleted ; for still the maiden's thoughts were more active than her needle, and the daylight she had invoked was less frequently employed to finish her embroidery, than to gaze on the thronging crowd without.

"Is it not strange," said she, after a pause, "that we have no tidings of Alphonse?"

"You forget, my love," replied her companion, "how sorrowfully Alphonse has been engaged. Affliction loves solitude, and not unfrequently derives from it a sweeter consolation than even friendship can bestow!"

"But surely Alphonse would be better here with us, than with the companionship of his own sad thoughts. We would let him still choose between solitude and friendship;" and as the fair girl spoke, her eyes were almost involuntarily turned again towards the window. "I do think I see him crossing the bridge now," she continued, looking earnestly in that direction. "Yes, yes; it is indeed Alphonse—how pale and thin he looks!" and a tear glistened in the bright eye, that but a moment before had been lighted up with pleasure.

As Alphonse de Clermont's step was heard upon the stair, both rose to receive him, full of the painful feelings which always pervade such meetings. It was their first, since the memorable 2nd of October, when all three, and a fourth, who was now, alas! no more, had been present at the brilliant entertainment described in our first chapter. Since then—one had to deplore the loss of a father; the second mourned the husband of a loved, lost sister; and the third, the fair girl, who alone was unallied by blood to the departed, whose gentle heart was ever ready to sympathize with affliction—now shared the sorrows of those she loved, and mingled her tears with theirs! Few words were

spoken during the first moments of meeting, but as its pain subsided, Alphonse was gradually able to relieve his full heart with the interesting recital of late events. Much was to be told ; and the night was far advanced, when, with a soothed and lightened spirit, he re-trod his way homewards.

"You will come to us to-morrow, Alphonse," said his aunt, at parting.

"If you can bear with so tiresome a visitation," he replied. "In truth, home has few charms for me now, thronged as it is with painful recollections."

"You must come and forget them with us, then," said she, affectionately pressing his hand ; "we shall expect you early." And Alphonse went on the morrow ; and the next day ; and the next still found him seeking the balm of friendship, rather than of solitude. And so weeks and months passed away, and summer came ; and gradually the young Count de Clermont was enabled, by the soothing effect of time, to dwell upon the death of his beloved father with resignation and composure.

Perhaps a yet sweeter alleviation was mingled with the consolations which he derived from his daily intercourse with his two interesting companions. The gentle girl who had devised a thousand means to beguile him of his grief, had been the playmate of his childhood—the idol of his infantine years. The earliest flowers of spring—the fairest fruits of summer, had been culled for *her*—and Adèle de St. Croix loved them less for their fragrance and richness, than

because they were the gifts of Alphonse. Now she had become the sharer of his sorrow—the sister of his heart—and Alphonse loved her as a dear, dear sister, (or thought he did,) and Adèle loved to call *him* brother, for her guileless heart knew no dearer name !

The dismissal of the Body Guards had deprived Alphonse of his situation ; and as his health was not yet sufficiently re-established to admit of his soliciting another, his want of employ enabled him to continue his daily visits to the Hotel Beaumont ; and in this manner several more, happy, tranquil months flew by.

Adèle was one day, as usual, seated at her embroidery frame by the window, commanding the bridge over the Seine. A footstep was heard in the ante-chamber, and *she*, supposing that it announced the daily expected visit of Alphonse, laid down her needle to welcome him. As she looked up, a servant entered the room with a letter, which he presented to the elder lady.

“The servant of Monsieur le Baron de St. Croix has brought you this letter, and waits, in case Madame may desire to see him.” She broke the seal, and read a few lines. “You will provide an apartment for M. le Baron’s messenger here.” The attendant left the room.

“Adèle, my love,” said Madame de Beaumont, when she had finished the perusal of the paper, “this is from your father ; come hither and read it.”

Adèle placed herself on a little stool at the feet of her companion, and took the letter. After a few preliminary lines it ran thus :—

"I believe I intimated to you, some time since, that I should, ere long, claim from you the charge which you have so long and so kindly undertaken ; and as, in your reply, you informed me that my daughter's education was now completed, I have only waited for a safe and fitting opportunity to convey her here. I would readily have complied with your kind wish to retain her still a little longer ; and the more so, as I am well aware that such an arrangement would have procured her many enjoyments, which she is unlikely to meet with at Audenach. But, independant of the anxiety which I naturally feel to have Adèle with me, I am further induced to desire her early presence, by important reasons connected with her future well-being through life. I beg, my dear Madam, you will accept my unfeigned thanks for all the care you have bestowed upon her ; thanks which I hope, ere long, to present in person, as I purpose visiting Paris in the course of a few months. The confidential servant who is the bearer of this, will make every necessary arrangement for my daughter's journey.—I am, Madam, with every sentiment of esteem, Yours,

VICTOR DE ST. CROIX.

Both remained several minutes in silence after Adèle had ended the perusal of her father's letter. It was the first bitter moment of her young life. She was about to leave the only home she had almost ever known, for that of a parent who was nearly a stranger to her. True, the separation had not been wholly unexpected ; but Adèle had hitherto only allowed her-

self to think of it, as a vague and distant uncertainty, too painful to dwell upon. Here it came before her in all its reality ; and Adèle's heart died within her, as she thought of the only welcome which that cold, constrained letter promised—so unlike the warmth and affection she had as yet alone experienced. She was roused by the sound of a tear falling heavily on the paper she still held.

“ So soon—must I, indeed, leave you so soon ? ” exclaimed the weeping girl, as she buried her face in the bosom of her companion.

Madame de Beaumont's voice faltered. “ We shall, I trust, meet again, ere long, my love,” said she, soothingly. “ Your father speaks of coming to Paris in a few months, and I doubt not he will permit you to accompany him.”

“ Does he ; does he, indeed, say so ? ” said Adèle, hastily drying her tears, to refer to the passage in her father's letter. Here then was a gleam of hope to light her in the structure of many an airy castle ; and with the buoyancy of youth, Adèle seized it, and built up her fairy mansion, till by degrees she regained sufficient composure to be able to discuss with Madame de Beaumont the necessary arrangements for her journey. They were thus employed, when the door again opened, and Alphonse de Clermont entered unannounced, with the familiarity of a privileged friend.

“ I am late to-day,” he said ; “ but these must be my peace-offering. Flowers are so much in request for the fête of to-morrow, that I have had some difficulty in procuring them ; ” and, as he spoke, with the

true gallantry of a Frenchman, he presented a bouquet, first to Madame de Beaumont, and then another to Adèle. They were both elegant; but Adèle's was composed of the rarest flowers the season could afford.

"Thank you, Alphonse," said Madame de Beaumont, "they are indeed beautiful."

Poor Adèle! At that moment, the remembrance of her approaching departure rushed over her in all its bitterness, and her only answer was a shower of tears. The young man stood in anxiety and amazement.

"We have poor thanks to offer you Alphonse, for this kindness," said Madame de Beaumont, "in the intelligence I have to convey. Adèle is about to leave us."

"To leave us, what *can* you mean?" exclaimed he.

Madame de Beaumont placed the Baron's letter in his hand. It trembled as he took it—He read it through, and for some minutes after his eyes remained fixed upon the paper, as though he would have blotted out the words it contained. When at last he did raise them, it was only to encounter the fixed gaze of Adèle bent upon him with an expression of agony, that told how deep—how bitter were the feelings of that moment. Instantly she withdrew her eyes, while a deep crimson blush mounted to her very temples. That momentary glance had sufficed to unveil to each the secret that had so long lain hidden in their bosoms. It was one of those fleeting but delicious moments of our existence, when the thoughts—hopes—feelings, of months—aye, sometimes, even of years, are condensed into the span of one little minute,

with an intensity almost too great for endurance, but for its briefness, like the falling star, whose flight is so rapid, that ere we can pause to gaze on its brightness, it sinks into the deep—dark—eternal ocean, and is lost to us for ever!—Years had passed by in the daily interchange of those thousand kindly offices that affection dictates—yet had they never spoken of love. What need was there to tell of that which neither doubted? It was only as the moment of separation approached, that they became fully aware how utter would be the loneliness of a separate existence. In Adèle, the feeling was somewhat tempered by hope, in the prospect of a speedy and happy re-union. Alphonse dwelt only on the passage in her father's letter, wherein he had alluded to the important reasons which made him desire his daughter's early presence. Those reasons—what might they be? He scarce dared ask himself the question; still less attempt to answer it. Adèle might, indeed, return, possibly in a few months;—but those few months—what a change might they not have effected in her situation?

Heavily and sadly that evening passed away. How unlike every other that had preceded it! All were unusually silent. Adèle had no voice for her guitar; Alphonse no heart to endure its tone. Madame de Beaumont alone endeavoured to assume an appearance of cheerfulness which she was indeed far from feeling.

“You will still go to the fête to-morrow, will

you not?" said Alphonse, as he rose to take his leave for the night.

"Certainly," she replied; "the Queen has notified her wishes to that effect, and our absence might, therefore, be observed."

"And Adèle will accompany you?"

Madame de Beaumont signified her assent.

"*Au revoir*, then," said the young man; and in another moment he had descended into the court, and quitted the house.

CHAPTER VIII.

“ Where the tall oak his spreading arms entwines,
And with the beech a mutual shade combines ;
Where flows the murmuring brook, inviting dreams,
Where bordering hazel overhangs the streams,
Whose rolling current, winding round and round,
With frequent falls makes all the woods resound ;
Upon the mossy couch my limbs I cast,
And e’en at noon the sweets of evening taste.”

Gay.

EVERY one that has ever sojourned in the gay little town of Boulogne-Sur-Mer, has heard of the Valley of Audenach, situated at about a league from its walls. Though so limited in its extent as scarcely to deserve the designation which has been applied to it, the little valley, nevertheless, contains within its narrow boundaries, miniature beauties sufficient to deserve the eulogium so frequently lavished out by its Boulognese admirers. The shady path which conducts to this romantic spot, is bordered by a little rivulet, which

pursues its meandering course through the valley ;— while the ground, being broken into hill and dale, presents an appearance of much greater magnitude than it really possesses. Nature has here embroidered her green mantle with every variety of wild flower ; and the delicious shade to be found beneath the wide spreading branches of many a lord of the forest, renders the sequestered little valley of Audenach a tempting place of repose for any wayfarer on life's weary pilgrimage, who would wish to exchange the garish light of day, for the indulgence of solitude and meditation. At the present time, its shades are more frequently invaded by the gay and the happy—being the favourite resort of many a merry band of revellers, who eagerly set forth from the neighbouring town of Boulogne, intent upon the union of the pleasant with the picturesque.

But at the period when the events recorded in the following pages took place, the little valley was almost untrodden ground, except to the favoured few who entered it as guests to the Lord of Audenach, whose dwelling stood then, (as it still does,) at the commencement of the shady path before alluded to. It was an irregular brick building, from the heterogeneous architecture of which, it would have been difficult, with any certainty, to have decided as to the date of the erection, the original pile having been at various times added to, according as might best suit either the inclination or convenience of its owner ; and the present lord, the Baron de Saint Croix, was too much

occupied with other matters, to give any heed to the embellishment of his domain.

Two iron gates gave entrance to a gravel sweep or drive immediately in front of the house, the first story of which was attained by a double flight of stone steps, with an iron ballustrade, entwined with roses and honey-suckles, whose rich clusters and sweet fragrance betokened the culture of some careful hand. At the back of the house, a piece of ground was laid out in parterres of flowers, according to the French taste of the day, and communicated immediately with the valley itself, of which, indeed, it almost formed a part.

The evening shadows were beginning to deepen, when a female figure was seen traversing the valley, in the direction of the Baron de St. Croix' dwelling. Her dress exhibited a singular mixture of the costume of her own sex, with the attire of the other. She wore a dark coloured thick petticoat, made very short, and excessively full, exactly similar to those universal at the present day among the *poissardes* of Boulogne, and over which was a short, loose jacket of faded red stuff. A few straggling locks of tangled dark hair, had escaped from beneath the cap which partially confined them, and which was surmounted by a man's hat, placed on the summit of her head, giving added height to her already tall figure. Her upper garment, was a dark brown cloak, clasped at the throat by a silver fastening, which was probably worn less as a defence against the weather, than for the purposes of

concealment; its capacious hood being sufficiently ample to admit of being drawn over the head at the pleasure of the wearer, so as effectually to screen her features from observation. These would have been handsome, but for their harsh, coarse outline to which a constant exposure to the elements, added to the deep traces of strong and uncontrolled passion, had given a more than usually displeasing expression. To a stranger, her age might have appeared to be verging towards some fifty years—though she was in fact more than ten years younger. As this singular looking being pursued her way, she paused at intervals, and looked boldly round in an attitude of expectation. Presently a man was seen approaching in the opposite direction, and she quickened her pace, to advance and meet him.

“Thou hast news for me,” said she, when sufficiently near for the under tone of her voice to be audible.

“Aye;” replied the man. “Old Pierre is gone to Paris.”

“Hast thou kept me loitering here, only to tell me that which I knew already,” interrupted the first speaker impatiently. “What more? Didst thou not learn his errand?”

“Else, it would avail thee little to tell of the old man’s journey,” said the other. “His errand is twofold—first, as concerns our master—”

“*Thy* master, not *mine*,” interrupted she, fiercely.

“Even as thou wilt,” returned the man; “his

errand, I say, is two-fold—that is two-fold in its means; but as thou knowest, ever single in its object. How thinkest thou the Baron will fulfil his duties as Deputy for our good town of Boulogne?” and the last words were spoken deliberately, and in a tone of the bitterest irony.

“Victor de St. Croix, a Deputy to the National Assembly! Impossible—he cannot sink so low. And yet,” she continued after a moment’s pause, “the eagle stoops for the prey that he would bear to his mountain nest on high: but let him beware, lest the beams that now attract him in his upward flight, should, ere long, but serve to dazzle and confound him! But thou hast not told me wherein this journey to Paris can affect the Baron’s purpose.”

“He would not risk the chances of an election, without first ensuring its success,” replied her companion. “Pierre, is, therefore, the bearer of a letter to the President of the Jacobin club at Paris.”

“Thou hast seen it?” interrupted she.

“Aye;” rejoined the other with a sneer; “and ’tis so full of treason against Louis and the Autrichienne, that I doubt not the reply will be favourable to his wishes.”

“The canting hypocrite!” exclaimed the woman, her dark eyes flashing fire as she spoke; “and does he then suppose that Marie de Théricourt will thus permit him to build up his puny greatness undisturbed?”

“He will at least make the effort,” said her com-

panion. "Thou knowest his nephew, the young Chevalier D'Orville?"

"Aye; a fitting instrument in so worthy a cause."

"Nevertheless, he hath both power and influence; the Baron has despatched a letter to obtain his support, as a reward for which, he offers him his daughter in marriage, with the lands of Audenach for her dower."

"Hah! sayest thou so?—and the maiden?"—

"Pierre is instructed to conduct Mademoiselle hither from Paris immediately, that the arrangements may be proceeded in without delay."

It were easy to frustrate *that* scheme," said Marie musingly. "The roads are none of the securest, and trusty hands and bold hearts are not wanting to do my bidding. And yet," she continued, "it were, perhaps, better to let the spider weave his web, ere we seek to entangle him in its toils. When thinkest thou will the maiden arrive?"

"In three days, it may be," rejoined her companion.

"Thou wilt give me timely notice—and slack not thy vigilance—we have need of it."

And the confederates parted.

CHAPTER IX.

"Vile and ingrate ! too late thou shalt repent
The base injustice thou hast done my love.

* * * * *

Heaven has no rage like love to hatred turn'd,
Nor hell a fury like a woman scorn'd."

Mourning Bride.

VICTOR Baron de Saint Croix was the representative of an ancient family, from whom he inherited the lands of which he was now the proprietor. His paternal estate had been originally small, but it was augmented in his person by one of those *mariages de convenance*, in which, as a matter of course, the inclination of the principal parties concerned, is always made subservient to their wordly interest and advantage. In the present instance, however, the sacrifice had cost nothing to either. Monsieur de St. Croix willingly consented to accept his cousin as a partner through life, in consideration of the lands of Audenach, which were to be her marriage portion. As to the young heiress herself, she was only informed

of the proposed union after all the preliminaries had been finally arranged ; and she quietly acquiesced, in the full conviction, that as woman's destiny in life was, simply—to be married—it mattered little through what agent that destiny was fulfilled. If, indeed, a state of indifference be the happiest which earth can bestow, then might Madame de St. Croix be pronounced perfectly happy. She was merely transferred from her father's house to that of her husband, accompanied by her embroidery frame and spinning wheel ; and she worked and spun, and spun and worked till the period arrived when the Baron hoped to become a father. In due course of time she gave birth to a daughter ; but the young wife made her exit from the world, as the little Adèle entered it. The Baron flourished a white pocket handkerchief on the day of his wife's interment, wore a black coat for the number of months duly prescribed afterwards, and there was an end of the matter ! Little Adèle was immediately transferred from her own home to that of a farmer in the neighbourhood, there to receive the maternal care of which heaven had been pleased to deprive her ; and, except for an occasional visit paid by her father to assure himself of her existence, the remembrance of his short-lived marriage appeared to have vanished altogether.

There was but one person in whom the Baron's marriage had produced any violent emotion ; but in that single bosom had been aroused a whirlwind of contending passions sufficiently violent to have over-

whelmed reason herself, but, that by a violent effort she retained her empire, only the more surely to direct their excess. Marie de Théricourt had been once young, beautiful, and virtuous. She needed but the guidance of a kind and skilful hand to lead her through the mazes of life, an ornament to her sex and to humanity. But, in an evil hour, her charms attracted the notice of the young Baron de St. Croix. She fell—and Marie became a disgrace to her family, a reproach, and an outcast. In proportion as she saw herself abandoned by all beside, even so did she cling but the more closely to the one sole link which now bound her to life. Every sentiment in Marie became a passion—deep—intense—uncontrolled. Her mind was one unbridled tumult of feeling—one wild chaos of emotion; and she idolized her lover with all the intensity of which such a nature is capable. He was to her, the one sole pivot upon which her world of worlds was for ever revolving—the one bright star to possess whose light was the solitary aim, end, and object of her being. When the report of the Baron's intended marriage burst upon her, Marie's first impulse was a scornful denial of its truth. Then came the dreadful certainty, and with it a paroxysm of rage and indignation so violent, that reason tottered on her throne. When her faithless lover again visited her, she overwhelmed him with a torrent of reproach and invective, which he fruitlessly endeavoured to allay. In vain did he reiterate the assurance, that she, and she alone

reigned mistress of his heart. Marie could not comprehend the possibility of a man's uniting himself for life to one woman, while all that made life desirable—his heart's best affections, were devoted to another. She drove him from her with the bitterest imprecations; and when at last, in the hope of appeasing the tempest, he proposed that, notwithstanding his marriage, their connection should still continue, her frenzy rose to such a height, that the Baron precipitately left his victim to reconcile herself to his desertion as she best might.

To him that desertion cost nothing. He was incapable alike of feeling pity or remorse; his attachment for Marie had been a mere passing fantasy, and he had already begun to weary of his conquest, when the marriage with his cousin was proposed to him.

Not so the unhappy victim of his perfidy. In the first tumult of her feelings, reason had well nigh fled. But, as the storm began to subside, Marie eagerly seized the guide that should henceforth direct her lone bark through life. To the love she had borne de Saint Croix, succeeded hatred the most deep and deadly. This hate then, was henceforth to be her pilot over the stormy sea of passion. Revenge, the dearly-desired haven to which all her wishes tended. No longer blinded by her attachment, she became keenly alive to the vices of the Baron's character, and marked all the secret springs of his conduct. She discovered that power was his darling idol; and that he would deem no sacrifice too great for its attain-

ment. A member of the aristocracy, he affected to despise its rights and privileges, only that, by deceiving the people as to his real motives, he might the more effectually build up his desired greatness ; thus casting aside the shadow, while he seized the substance. In profession, a republican and a Jacobin, he, nevertheless, reserved a too public manifestation of his opinions, till the tide of events had sufficiently advanced, to enable him securely to declare himself a supporter of the rising party. As time flowed on, gradually the Baron's harangues became more loud and warm. He declaimed upon "liberty and equality," and, "the rights of the people," with as much vehemence, and as little sincerity as any of his neighbours. The people, indeed, *might* be allowed sufficient liberty to place *him*—their champion, on the elevation he had so well deserved at their hands ; but that point once gained, the sooner they were crushed to the dust from whence they sprang, the better. When the last sighs of the feudal system were drowned in the roar of faction, and when the line of demarcation that separated the vassal from his lord, was merged in the distinction of aristocrat and democrat, the Baron de St. Croix eagerly relinquished the high sounding names and privileges to which his birth entitled him, as the badges of a class which the spirit of party had now fiercely excluded from every present chance of aggrandizement. It was under this impression that he now sought the post of Deputy for the town of Boulogne. The National

Assembly opened a wider field for his ambition. It was the channel through which the ferocious Robespierre was already striding fearfully onwards in his bloody course, and Victor de Saint Croix longed to be his competitor in the race.

Through long years did Marie de Théricourt, with a quickened sagacity and penetration, watch every turn in the Baron's conduct. She had discovered the key-stone on which all his hopes rested—her hatred extended itself to the whole body of that aristocracy of which he was a member; and she patiently waited, 'till the fitting moment should arrive, when she hoped to see the whole fabric overthrown. In the mean time, she took care to inform herself of every occurrence in the Baron's family; and it was by means of one of her spies, that she became acquainted, in the manner we have seen, with the purport of old Pierre's journey to Paris. She had, likewise, assiduously laboured, in her assumed character of a fortune teller, to insinuate herself into the confidence and good-will of the neighbouring peasantry; and Marie's heart beat with a savage joy, as she saw the moment approach, when she hoped, by means of the influence thus obtained, to play her part in that fearful game, wherein private passions, prejudices, and resentments operated so powerfully in hastening the deadly crisis which was to desolate, with anarchy and wretchedness, one of the fairest portions of Europe.

CHAPTER X.

“ With equal virtue form’d, and equal grace,
The same distinguish’d by their sex alone :
Her’s the mild lustre of the blooming morn,
And his the radiance of the risen day.
They lov’d : but such their guileless passion was,
As in the dawn of time inform’d the heart
Of innocence and undissembling truth.
’Twas friendship, heightened by the mutual wish,
Th’ enchanting hope, and sympathetic glow,
Beam’d from the mutual eye. Devoting all
To love, each was to each a dearer self ;
Supremely happy in th’ awakened power
Of giving joy !”

Thomson’s Summer.

MEANWHILE, the little Adèle was receiving, under the roof of her foster-father, all the solicitude and kindness her tender age demanded. But, as she advanced in years, not all the affection the child had inspired, could qualify the honest farmer and his wife for retaining the guardianship of the heiress of Audenach. The Baron was no way inclined himself to superintend the education of his daughter, and still less to admit

under his roof an instructress, who, at the same time that she directed the studies of Adèle, might occasionally be an inconvenient spy upon his own actions. It became, therefore, serious matter of consideration, what course was the best to be pursued ; and the Baron at last determined to write to the widow of a distant relative, in the hope that she would consent to take charge of his daughter, and procure for her those advantages which he was either unable or unwilling she should receive at home.

The proposal was readily acceded to, and the little Adèle was, without delay, removed from Boulogne to Paris. The Baron could scarcely have selected a person better calculated than was Madame de Beaumont, for the important charge she had undertaken. Gifted by nature with a refined taste and a cultivated understanding, she possessed those still rarer qualities—a sound discrimination, and a correct judgment. Strict herself in the performance of every moral and religious duty ; indulgent to the faults and failings of others, her sweetest gratifications were derived from promoting the happiness of those around her.

“ My child,” would she sometimes say to her young charge, “ if you can strew but one flower in the path of a fellow-creature—omit it not. Its sweetness will more than repay you !”

It may well be believed, that between Adèle and her kind instructress, there sprang up all the warm affection of parent and child. The Baron, fully occupied with his own ambitious plans, saw his daughter

so seldom, that at last he became almost a stranger to her ; and, indeed, had it been otherwise, there could have existed but little sympathy between two natures so different. Hence it happened that all Adèle's warmest affections became divided between Madame de Beaumont and her nephew Alphonse de Clermont, who was about three years her senior. The duties of his station retaining the Count de Clermont constantly in Paris, Alphonse and Adèle were, during the years of childhood, almost daily companions, and Madame de Beaumont watched with pleasure the progress of an attachment, which she fondly anticipated would be productive of so much happiness to both. In a worldly point of view, the union of the young heir of the House of Clermont, with her lovely charge, would be a very equal one ; and in tastes, habits, and acquirements nature seemed to have formed them for each other. Both young, beautiful, talented, and virtuous, with earth's fairest prospects spread out before them, who could have foreseen that the flowers which lay scattered o'er their onward path, would be withered ere they could attain them. Alas ! were it given to mortal men to penetrate the dim vista of the future, how many, (were the choice permitted them,) would prefer the peaceful repose of an early tomb, to their passage through the dark valley that must conduct them to it !—How doubly prized and cherished would be the evanescent, vernal hours of happiness, when the yet unscathed heart bounds joyously forward—the bright star of

Hope, yet undimmed by disappointment, for its guide ! Why is it that that beautiful star—that very Hope that hath awakened the sweetest lay of the poet—the fairest dream of the visionary—should prove itself so often but a vain mockery—a brilliant, but fleeting meteor, tempting its victims onward through that delay that “maketh the heart sick,” only to plunge them at last in anguish, disappointment, and despair. Then comes the bitter moment when the heart first awakens from the delusion it hath cherished—when it learns, for the first time, the world’s cold lesson of distrust, and looks vainly round amid earth’s best hopes, for one sure haven where the weary spirit may find refuge from the storm !

But to Adèle, at least, such feelings were still unknown—She had not yet tasted of the bitter cup. To *her*, the past—the present—the future, were alike but as one bright vision of unmingled happiness. She dreamed not of misery : how *could* she imagine the existence of that of which she scarce knew the name. Even Alphonse had still to learn the lesson of disappointment. True, he had endured *one* severe affliction ; but it is not even by such trials the knowledge is acquired. In those dispensations which come direct from the hand of the Almighty we recognise His power, and bow before it. The trials most difficult to bear, are those which seem to spring from the treachery—the heartlessness—the inconstancy of mankind. The former chasten and purify the heart—the latter do but irritate it. The one awakens our humility—

the other arouses our pride. We can bend to God—but not to man; and in looking upon the instrument by which He has been pleased to afflict us, we forget that all trials proceed alike from the same Almighty source, whatever may be the medium through which they reach us. Of all those minor evils, which are so trying to the temper and the heart, Alphonse and Adèle were utterly ignorant. *Their* only world, had been a world of love and harmony, and within its mystic circle their best pleasures had been derived from promoting and sharing the enjoyments of the dear beings who composed it. And beautiful! most beautiful, was the love of those two young hearts, in all its high and disinterested purity! Unlike that selfish feeling so often mis-named love, that seeks in the object of its adoration but the toy of an idle hour, or the means wherewith to gratify its own sordid interest; theirs was the pure, the only true affection, which is ever ready to enhance the gratifications of the beloved object, even at the expense of its own. Nay, more—the greater the sacrifice demanded of their affection, even the more eagerly would they have welcomed it. To a generous mind, there is no recompense so exquisite as the consciousness of having relinquished pleasure, or endured privation for the sake of one it loves!

Previous to the death of his father, the known zeal and attachment of his family, had naturally drawn upon Alphonse de Clermont the favourable, and, therefore, dangerous notice of the unfortunate

Louis XVI. Since the fatal 5th of October, he had abstained from presenting himself at Court, and consequently his claims to the hatred of the revolutionary party had been forgotten. He had besides mingled so little, as yet, in the stormy world of politics, and had, moreover, borne his newly-acquired honors with so much forbearance, that none of those enemies, whom his position might otherwise have called forth, had been aroused against him. But such good fortune could not be of very long continuance, where it concerned one so likely, by his superiority, to awaken the envy of those to whom nature had been less prodigal of her gifts. In person, Alphonse was eminently handsome. His eyes, of deep blue, were shaded by long lashes, which, as well as the curls that clustered thickly round his pale, broad forehead, were of the darkest shade of brown. His ruby lip contrasted powerfully with his usually pale cheek, which was perfectly colourless, unless when dyed in the momentary flush of generous indignation, at whatever was base or unworthy; or when warmed alike to admiration by whatever claimed his love. His form, which but slightly exceeded the middle size, received added height from a certain loftiness of mein, the *hauteur* of which was tempered by the light step and graceful bearing of the young heir of the house of Clermont. Never have I seen one, who possessed so completely that indescribable impress of high birth, and elevated sentiment, which we call "*l'air noble*,"—nor any, whose outward bearing was so true a mirror of

the mind within. Fearless in enterprize ; intrepid in danger ; attached to his Sovereign with the most unbounded and ardent devotion, a fresh opportunity soon presented itself, when all the admirable qualities for which he was so distinguished were to be called forth in support of that cause, which he had proved himself so ready to defend, even at the peril of life itself.

Here let me linger a moment amid the early recollections of scenes which were destined, alas ! to be as short-lived as they were delicious. I love to dwell upon that brief period of happiness : to recall the hours that were spent—the enjoyments that were shared in the society of those of whom, alas ! all that now remains is the dear and hallowed remembrance ! Fancy still pictures to me that cheerful circle, assembled round the blazing hearth. Once more I behold the bright eye and the blooming cheek ; I hear the joyous laugh of innocent mirth, and listen to the sweet strains of melody with which our evenings were wont to be enlivened. The sounds die away—the objects fade from my mental vision—my pen must be schooled to tell of other scenes than these. Would that the fable of oblivion's stream could sometimes be realized !

CHAPTER XI.

"Pomp and power are toys,
Which e'en the mind at ease may well disdain ;
But oh ! what mockery is the tinsel pride
Of splendour, when the mind
Lies desolate within."

Barbarossa.

It will be recollected, that on the evening which brought the intelligence of Adèle's unexpected departure, Alphonse de Clermont had alluded to a fête which was to take place on the morrow. It was one of a series of brilliant entertainments, given by the beautiful Princesse de Lamballe, in her apartments at the Tuileries—the last with which the Court of the unfortunate Louis XVI. was ever enlivened ! As the magnificent *salons* of Madame de Lamballe were frequently graced by the presence of Marie Antoinette herself, they became the point of union to the royalist noblesse, who eagerly sought to manifest their devotion to the Court, by the display of all the rank, splendour, beauty, and talent, their party could

boast. Ambassadors, foreigners of distinction, and the *élite* of the French *vielle cour*, hastened to pay their homage to the lovely hostess, whose charming *soirées* displayed all the brilliancy of a court, divested of its formal etiquette and tedious ceremonies.

It was at one of these, then, that Adèle de St. Croix was about to make her first appearance in the world of fashion and frivolity. The morning passed sadly enough, in spite of a visit from Alphonse ; but as evening came, and the business of the toilette was completed, I am obliged to acknowledge, with the proper veracity of an historian, that in the single glance which Adèle cast upon her mirror, the pain of parting was for a moment forgotten. Not that she was vain—few were less so : but every beautiful woman *must* see, what all the world sees ; and perhaps, at this particular fête, Adèle was not *very* sorry to look her best, for—Alphonse was to be there. At all events, we need not analyze too closely the reasons why her heart was lighter, as she descended into the *salon* where she knew he was waiting to be their escort ; nor, why a bright blush mantled in her cheek, and the words faltered on her tongue, as she attempted to reply to his compliments upon her appearance. In truth, Alphonse thought he had never looked upon so lovely a being. Her simple white robe was fastened with loops and knots of large pearls, several strings of which were also twined through the rich tresses which now hung in clustering curls over her neck and shoulders. Her only

ornament was the *bouquet* he had given her, in which the delicate hue of the lily predominated, and which, as Alphonse truly remarked, there had been some difficulty in procuring, for the gardens of Paris could scarcely supply the enormous *bouquets of fleurs de lis*, now universally worn by the ladies of the Court, as the badge of their loyalty.

When the little trio reached the palace of the Tuileries, they found a guard of honour drawn up to receive them, whose appearance announced that the Queen was to be present. The vestibules decorated with evergreens and exotics, and thronged with servants in rich liveries; the brilliant assembly with which the magnificent saloons were crowded, and the fascinating grace with which the lovely hostess received and greeted her numerous guests, all were so new and so entrancing to Adèle, that she noted not the universal buzz of admiration, which her own exquisite grace and beauty had excited. It were far otherwise with Alphonse. None of the encomiums lavished upon the gentle girl who leaned on his arm for support, were lost on *him*. He heard all—and heard them with pride and pleasure. *It is so sweet to be proud of one we love!*

As they traversed the long suite of apartments, Madame de Beaumont presented her young charge to her numerous acquaintances; and Adèle found herself, on all sides, assailed with congratulations upon this, her first appearance. On retracing their steps, they found the Queen already arrived, and

seated at the card table. When the game was finished, Marie Antoinette arose, and taking her place on an adjoining couch, she entered into conversation with Madame de Lamballe. As Alphonse de Clermont stood at a little distance, he observed the Queen suddenly pause, and direct towards the card-table she had just quitted, her beautiful countenance, in which the traces of suppressed agitation were strongly marked. Turning his eyes in the same direction, he perceived a person, whose dress denoted him to be a foreigner of distinction, in the act of ostentatiously displaying an antique ring, which contained a single lock of hair.*

“It was a gift from one of the descendants of the great Oliver Cromwell himself,” said he, in a foreign accent, and in a tone purposely loud enough to reach the ears of the Queen. “I wear it on all occasions of solemnity or splendour, as the most precious ornament of my Earldom.”

“Insolent savage!” exclaimed De Clermont, his fine features flushed with indignation at the intended insult. The near vicinity of the Queen induced him to intend the words should be inaudible. They were so to the offender, and to those whom he had addressed, but they had reached the quick ears of Marie Antoinette, who looked first at the speaker, and then turning to Madame de Lamballe,—

“Surely,” said she, “that is Monsieur de Clermont, to whom we owe such heavy obligations!”

* Historical.

A word of explanation, and a sign from Madame de Lamballe, brought Alphonse nearer to the Queen.

"It is long since we have seen you at Court, Monsieur de Clermont," said she, her composure in some degree restored. "Have you been absent from Paris?"

"No, Madame," he replied. "Nothing but severe illness would have prevented my having long since paid my respectful homage to your Majesty."

"And you were desirous," said the Queen, smiling, "that all traces of it should disappear first, lest those in whose service it was gained, should be reminded of the painful cause. You have been somewhat tardy in claiming our thanks for your services," she continued; "but they have not been the less felt and appreciated."

"Your Majesty is pleased to over-rate my poor services," said de Clermont. "I did but fulfil the duty of every loyal Frenchman."

A half sigh escaped from Marie Antoinette. "Well, well," she said, "You must allow *us* to judge of that." Then looking kindly towards Adèle, whom Alphonse had been obliged to leave standing in painful confusion; "But I detain you from your lovely companion; she added; "we shall, in future, I trust, see you more frequently at Court."

As De Clermont respectfully bowed and withdrew, the Queen rose from her seat. The appearance of her young preserver, had, in some degree, modified the painful impression caused by the previous insult;

but her feelings had been too deeply wounded to admit of her remaining, with composure, amid the gay scene by which she was surrounded; and accordingly her Majesty almost immediately withdrew from the assembly, and retired to her private apartments.

The young Count de Clermont could not but be flattered and gratified by the favourable notice bestowed on him by the Queen. But neither that mark of attention, nor the brilliant scene around him, could divert his mind from other and less pleasing thoughts. As Adèle still leaned on his arm, he marked the admiration she excited, and remembered how soon the object of it would be removed far from him. They now stood in the embrasure of a window, near which Madame de Beaumont was seated in conversation with a friend, from whose interminable stories there seemed little chance of her escaping.

"Will you rest a moment, Adèle," said De Clermont; "you were complaining of fatigue an instant since?" They seated themselves in silence, and for some minutes neither spoke, though the thoughts of each were busy on the same theme.

"How happy all these people look," said Adèle at last; and her words might have been interpreted, "how different are *their* feelings to *mine*."

"And yet," answered De Clermont, "could we read the thoughts of each, we should probably discover many an aching heart beneath a cheerful countenance."

"Can it be possible," said Adèle, looking up incredulously, "that those who appear so gay, so careless, are but playing a part. If it indeed be so, how easy to them must be the task of concealment!"

"Easy," exclaimed De Clermont, vehemently, "Oh! no—the task is torture!" Adèle knew that *she* had found it so, but she made no reply. "You are unable to comprehend me," said De Clermont, misinterpreting her silence.

"I can comprehend the suffering, but not its concealment," answered Adèle; and in truth an unusual tone of melancholy had, during the whole evening, pervaded her lovely features.

"No;" continued Alphonse, scarcely noticing her words; "you are unable to comprehend me. Oh! Adèle, you are unable to divine the tortures it has this evening cost me to assume the mask of cheerfulness. Do you then imagine that all the empty pomp and glitter with which we are surrounded, and all the nothings to which I have been forced to listen, can for one moment have banished the remembrance of how soon *you* will be far distant from me—or, *can* you believe that the attractions of this gorgeous circle will retain their fascination when you, whose presence constitutes to me its only charm, will be no longer here to grace it?"

"No, Alphonse;" said Adèle; "it is not, I know, in scenes like these that you delight; but *you* will still have friends in Paris; Madame de Beaumont will be with you—while I—" her voice faltered,—“I,

shall be utterly among strangers ; my only consolation consisting in the certainty of how much less painful is your situation than my own."

" I shall, indeed, have friends," said De Clermont ; " but who among them all can fill *your* place ; and even they, and every object we have seen together, will but serve to remind me of that which I have lost. *You*, Adèle, are, indeed, going among strangers—you will visit new scenes, and form new associations—Perhaps," he added, " they may teach you to forget those whom you have left behind."

" You do me wrong, Alphonse," said Adèle, vainly struggling with her emotion ; " indeed, you do me wrong. Surely, it were more likely the absent should be forgotten amid the distractions of this great city, than in the seclusion of my father's quiet home. You have told me of your grief at our parting. Am I then forbidden to share it ? or, do you deem me no longer worthy of the companionship—no longer deserving of the name of sister ?"

De Clermont paused ere he replied.

" If my words have given you pain," said Adèle, timidly, " Heaven knows it was unwittingly."

" Oh ! no, Adèle," exclaimed De Clermont ; " it is rather I who must claim *your* indulgence. You desire still to retain the name of sister. But yesterday, Adèle, I was proud and happy in being permitted to call you so. Your father's letter came—it spoke of our separation—it told that you were to be torn from me—it reminded me, that there were other and

far dearer ties than those which circle round a sister's affection; and that *my* only claims upon your love and your remembrance, were such as you might choose voluntarily to accord. We are about to part, Adèle—to meet again, we know not when nor where. Tell me then, I conjure you, will you be to me only as a sister still—or, may I hope, at some future, happier time, to call you by a yet dearer name?"

A blush, bright and beautiful, lighted up the before pale cheek of the gentle being whose small white hand lay clasped unresistingly in that of Alphonse de Clermont.

"I have loved the name of sister," said she, in a low tone, and without venturing to raise her eyes "since it was from Alphonse I received it. It was given by him, and as such I could imagine no dearer—let me retain it then, 'till,"—

"Till we meet again, only to exchange it for another, far, far more precious," interrupted he, pressing the hand he still held within his own.

As the manuscript neither records what was Adèle's answer, nor the conversation which occupied the half-hour that followed, we may suppose that both were uninteresting to all but the speakers themselves. To them, however, the evening's close was worth all the tedious hours that had preceded it; and when Madame de Beaumont signified that it was time to retire, Adèle had so forgotten her fatigue, and Alphonse his weariness, that both heard the intimation with regret.

CHAPTER XII.

“ She is humble born ;
But trust me, Christian, I do see no cause,
Why I should blush in feeling for the lowly.
The peasant, pining on his bed of straw,
Should draw as warm a tear from melting pity,
As when a monarch suffers.”

Mountaineers.

It was when the Comte de Clermont was returning homewards, that an incident occurred, which passed unheeded at the time, but which, as it influenced his after-fate in a very remarkable manner, requires a more particular notice here. When Alphonse had assisted Madame de Beaumont and Adèle into their carriage, had given and received the last “ Good night,” and had watched their retiring equipage ’till it was no longer visible, he traversed the great square of the Tuileries ; and passing beneath its northern archway, directed his steps towards the Rue St. Honoré. Turning the sharp corner of a narrow street, he found his progress suddenly arrested by a

little knot of persons gathered round a carriage, the owners of which were still at the fête he had just quitted. Making his way through the crowd, De Clermont perceived, by the light of a lamp, the cause of the disturbance. A female figure lay prostrate in the street, immediately in advance of the horses, the fretful impatience of which, their intoxicated driver was evidently unable either to guide or restrain; and the unfortunate person before mentioned, was, consequently, in imminent danger of being run over. While the bystanders looked on in terrified inactivity, De Clermont darted forward, and, seizing the reins, enabled them to drag the prostrate figure of the woman from her perilous position. Releasing his hold, the animals, rendered furious by the check they had received, dashed off at full speed; and Alphonse was so intent upon watching their fearful progress, that it was some minutes ere he turned towards the pathway where the female he had preserved had been deposited. When he did so, he perceived, to his utter amazement, that she was still inanimate,—but alone! The crowd, drawn together by stupid curiosity, had, one and all, dispersed, leaving the poor, senseless old woman, propped against a pillar; and Alphonse looked round in vain, in the hope of descrying some person to whom he could apply for assistance. To leave the poor old creature in her present situation was impossible. Following, therefore, the dictates of his benevolent feelings, he procured a *fiacre*, and lifting his senseless

burthen into it, sprang in himself, and directed the coachman to drive to his own hotel. There, having given the necessary orders, that his *protégée* should be properly attended to, Alphonse retired to the undisturbed repose which the events of the whole evening could not fail of procuring for him. The favourable notice of the Queen, his subsequent conversation with Adèle; and, finally, the benevolent action which he had performed, all combined to make a pleasant picture for retrospection; in the contemplation of which, De Clermont fell asleep to dream of the future, and of Adèle.

On the following morning, his enquiries respecting his new inmate were satisfactorily answered. The cares of his housekeeper had quickly succeeded in recalling her to sense; and the poor old woman had now arisen, perfectly recovered, and full of gratitude for the kind treatment she had experienced. Her only remaining uneasiness, she said, arose from the anxiety her only son would feel on her account, and, accordingly, a messenger had been despatched to their humble dwelling to inform him of her safety. The young man was already arrived, as the Comte de Clermont crossed the court yard, on his way to the Hotel Beaumont. As he passed the porter's lodge, he stopped to say a few words of kindness to his *protégée*.

“*Que le bon Dieu vous bénisse !*” exclaimed she, fervently clasping her withered hands. “This is my son, Monsieur le Comte. Come forward, *mon fils*,

and beg a blessing from Heaven upon the noble gentleman that hath saved the life of thy poor old mother."

But the person thus addressed seemed little inclined to second the old woman's gratitude, at least, with any outward demonstration. There was an undefined, but peculiarly forbidding expression in his whole aspect, which left it doubtful whether he was, or was not, grateful for the kindness bestowed. The rude garb of a mechanic of the lowest grade, concealed his short, stout figure, leaving only his thick, bull-like throat, uncovered. The greasy red cap which he still retained, notwithstanding the presence of a superior, rested upon a head enveloped in a profusion of matted black hair; while thick, shaggy eye-brows, overhanging a pair of eyes of the same coal black hue, increased the dogged, sinister expression of his ferocious countenance. The harsh voice, and coarse *patois* accent, in which this forbidding looking creature replied to his mother's address, were perfectly suited to his ungainly appearance; and from the words themselves, and the tone and manner in which they were uttered, De Clermont was half tempted to believe that, in rescuing his poor old mother from destruction, he had performed no very acceptable service.

"Dost thou tell me, mother," said he, fixing his dark eyes stedfastly on De Clermont as he spoke, "dost thou tell me to ask gifts from Heaven for the great, the titled Comte de Clermont? Shew me the

blessings I may invoke, that he hath not already within his grasp? Hath he not power, and rank, and wealth to indulge every wish, and youth to profit by the indulgence? What more need he desire? But were it even otherwise, and could *my* prayers to Heaven encrease his overflowing store of earthly good, think you, the high-born Comte de Clermont would stoop to receive the benefit through the medium of a low-born, base mechanic?"

The old woman stood in dismayed astonishment; while De Clermont felt himself irresistably interested in the singular being before him, whose words, all ungracious as they were, conveyed to him a less unpleasant impression than, probably, even the speaker himself anticipated. Well aware of the spirit of the time, and of the hatred the lower classes had imbibed for the whole body of the aristocracy, he rightly conjectured, that the ungrateful sarcasm conveyed in the young man's speech, was directed rather against the class to which he belonged, than against himself individually; and that Martin was grateful for the kindness bestowed, though he would have preferred accepting it from one of another order. De Clermont also knew that, in numerous cases, the situation of the lower classes was one of extreme hardship and oppression; and, moreover, that many of his own condition in life were but indifferently disposed towards measures of conciliation. He knew, too, that but a short time previously, famine had been added to the other sufferings of the poorer class,

and he judged that, in the present instance, the individual in question spoke with the irritated feelings of accumulated misfortune. He framed his answer accordingly.

"You mistake me," he said; "I fear me the world has dealt but harshly with you, that you judge thus unkindly of others."

"Harshly? aye!" returned the young man, while his dark brow contracted, and his lip quivered. "I have been houseless, friendless,—without food, and without raiment; driven forth from the humble home of my father, with my poor old mother, to seek succour among strangers; but to them who made me so, a day of retribution is at hand. Comtè de Clermont," he continued, his brow relaxing into a milder expression, "you have preserved to me the only earthly treasure that the tyranny and avarice of man had spared. I give you no thanks; for words are but empty sounds, forgotten, even more readily than they are uttered. But, the time *may* come,—nay, perhaps it is not far distant, when you shall find that he who now addresses you, can equally remember kindness, as he can requite injury!"

The tone, manner, and words of the speaker, convinced De Clermont that his first supposition was well founded.

"I desired neither thanks nor recompense," said he; "nevertheless, I am willing to accept them after my own fashion. Reward me by leaving your poor old mother here, till fortune is kinder to you than

she has been of late. You can come daily and convince yourself that she is well cared for."

"I cannot separate from my mother," said the youth; "she needs a thousand cares that must come from no hand but mine."

"Then share the asylum I offer to her," said De Clermont.

"Impossible;" answered Martin; "in so doing, I should but return you evil for good. It cannot be as you propose."

"As you will," said De Clermont; "she shall be placed, then, on my list of weekly pensioners."

So saying, he put a purse of money into the old woman's hand; and having given orders that she should share the weekly allowance, continued since his father's death to a certain number of poor persons, he pursued his way to the Hotel Beaumont.

His singular interview furnished subject for deep and curious reflection. It brought before him the change that had come over the spirit of the times; and the probable consequences it was likely to engender. Abuses had gradually crept into the political and social system, till the disease had become incurable by ordinary means. All persons agreed in believing that a crisis was approaching,—that the guidance of a skilful hand was requisite, to check the further progress of the disorder; but few foresaw how rudely the thread of social life would be snapped asunder; nor how soon the tottering edifice of order and harmony would be crumbled into dust. That

partial reform in the government was necessary; that an amelioration of the condition of the lower classes was to be desired, none could doubt. But, in disseminating the broad principles of liberty and equality, the impossibility of reducing them to practice was overlooked; in repairing the beautiful statue of the Constitution, the necessity for upholding the pedestal on which it rested, was unfortunately forgotten. Whence sprang this omission? Was it from the dangerously brilliant writings of Voltaire, Rousseau, and others of the same stamp; which, involving the morals and manners of the age in their impure stream of vice and infidelity, prepared the minds of men for abandoning the guidance of religion, to follow only the dictation of human pride and human passion? May it not also be reasonably doubted, whether the universal and indiscriminating search after knowledge did not materially tend to hasten the same unhappy result? From the crude chaos of comparative ignorance in which the mass of the people had hitherto been plunged, they eagerly looked (without judgment to direct their course, or leisure to pursue it,) on the fascinating meteor light which shone in the fashionable writings of the day, like a flash of lightning in the darkness, which serves but to bewilder the benighted traveller.

To derive wholesome nutriment from the tree of knowledge, we must have leisure to contemplate—to digest it. Whether the too refined education of the lower classes, which naturally gives birth to wants

and wishes hitherto unknown, does, indeed, tend to the improvement of their moral and religious character;—whether the peasant be happier following his plough, or studying political economy; or, whether the discoveries of modern science will enable him to find some philosopher's stone, so that he may devise a method by which to live, move, and have his being, without the intervention of the common, but necessary cares of life, which become distasteful to the tyro in learning, the smatterer in *alogies* and *ologies*,—is a question that never *has* been, and, probably, never *will* be satisfactorily decided.

As we touch on debateable ground, and as controversy is not the province of a work of this nature, we will, with the kind permission of our readers, abstain from farther discussion of the subject; and leave to others to determine whether the “school-master,” who “is abroad,” with his book in one hand, does not bear his accustomed attribute,—the instrument of flagellation, in the other.

CHAPTER XIII.

ANTONIO.—What kind of man is this ?

FERRARDO.—A kind of devil,

That grasps you with his eye, as fascinate
Serpents, 'tis said, their prey ;—a tongue to match,
His glossing speech, the master fiend himself !

The Wife.

ON the evening of the fête of the Princesse de Lamballe at the Palace of the Tuileries, a meeting of a very different nature took place in another part of Paris. When the confidential servant of the Baron de St. Croix had delivered his master's letter to Madame de Beaumont, his first care was to seek out the abode of the Chevalier d'Orville, that he might present the important despatch, which was, in fact, the leading cause of his journey to Paris. Though the import of that despatch has been already hinted at, it may perhaps be as well to recal it here.

At the period of which we are writing, the National Assembly was on the point of dissolving itself, to give place to another body of representatives to

be called the Legislative Assembly, the members of which, it had been decreed, should be entirely new. The manner of conducting the elections was equally novel, and strongly tinged with the spirit of the times. The citizens were to choose a certain number of electors, the electors in their turn to choose the Deputies—hence the new assembly became wholly popular. The court, the clergy, and the nobles, were alike excluded from all influence in the choice of the representatives, which was unreservedly transferred, nominally to the people, but virtually to the Jacobin and other factions, who directed all popular movements. For the same reason, the respectable part of the community in general, avoided a situation which would have obliged them to sacrifice their private feelings and principles, to subdue the sanguinary spirit of one party, only to incline the balance in favour of another equally vindictive. The number of members for the eighty-three departments into which France was then divided, was 745, and of these, it is well known, only 48 possessed incomes exceeding £100 per annum. The Legislative Assembly was consequently composed of advocates, pamphleteers, and vagabonds of various denominations, who soon proved that they had no objection to make themselves better known than their predecessors, by surpassing them in the confusion they occasioned.

It was to become a member of this respectable fraternity, that the Baron de St. Croix now sought to conciliate the good will of his nephew, the young

Chevalier d'Orville. The preceding remarks will account for Marie de Théricourt's expressions of surprise when she became acquainted, in the manner already related, with the Baron's purpose, the motive for which, however, her knowledge of his character enabled her as quickly to discern. It was the only path his prescience had pointed out as likely to lead to popular favour, and consequently to power; and, with the pitiless selfishness which freezes up all the kindlier feelings of our nature, the Baron hesitated not to adopt whatever means were best calculated to effect his object. He was aware that the all-powerful Jacobin clubs would take the lead in the approaching elections; he knew that their President, Maximilien Robespierre, had made choice of his nephew as a useful and fitting associate, and he determined to ensure D'Orville's influence and interest by offering him a more than equivalent return. Adèle, being his only child, was entitled to the lands of Audenach, by right of inheritance; and her husband, whoever he might be, would, at the Baron's death, succeed to his rich estates. Any consideration for his daughter's wishes on the subject never once occurred to him. He had been too long accustomed to consider women only as necessary household appendages, as mere ministers to the pleasures and caprices of man, to vouchsafe even a passing thought upon that which was to constitute his child's happiness or misery through life. Marriage he looked upon as a necessary evil. In his own he had sought, not his wife,

but her dower ; and he was by no means sorry when the common lot of mortality enabled him to retain the one, while it disencumbered him of the other.

It will be remembered that Marie de Thèricourt's confederate informed her that the Baron had despatched a letter to the President of the Jacobin club at Paris. The hurry incident to the manner in which he obtained his information, had, however, deceived him. The Baron's packet contained two letters for his nephew, one of a private nature, the other penned with much care for the perusal of Robespierre, though not directly addressed to him. As De St. Croix was aware that the Jacobins admitted only to their association those persons who implicitly adopted their opinions, he framed his letter accordingly, spicing it with sufficiently intelligible allusions to the conduct to be pursued to "the powers that be," to render it palatable to the revolutionary taste of the President. So far, well. But the Baron had not calculated on the delay which unforeseen circumstances would produce in the accomplishment of his wishes. D'Orville's interest made him as anxious, as was his uncle, for their fulfilment, to ensure which, it was necessary he should choose a favourable opportunity for opening his mission to Robespierre. In the meanwhile, however, a train of events took place, which rendered the utmost caution indispensable. On the 24th of June, the Royal Family took flight to Varennes ; on the 26th of the same month, they were arrested, and brought back prisoners to Paris ; and as their evasion

was necessarily connived at, if it did not indeed originate with various members of the aristocracy, the whole body fell under suspicion, though positive accusation could only be pointed at a few. D'Orville having allowed the first impression to wear off, determined to seize the earliest moment for furthering his uncle's wishes and his own interests, and it was not long ere his good fortune furnished him with the opportunity of so doing. The Jacobin club of Paris had, for a considerable time, been increasing its revolutionary tone of unequivocal disloyalty; but in the month of July a meeting was held, which in violence far exceeded all those which had preceded it. It was on that occasion, and when the necessity for caution in the choice of their representatives was under discussion, that Robespierre, the President, uttered those memorable words which contained a faint outline of the bloody course he intended to pursue at a later period.

"We approach," he said, "the moment when our liberty or our servitude, our happiness or our misery, must be for ever decided. From without, tyrants surround us—within, the friends of tyranny conspire. They *will* conspire 'till Hope is torn from crime. The abyss is open—on all sides they seek to precipitate us. We must then seek out, destroy, and exterminate the enemies of the republic. The people must be conducted by reason—their enemies by terror. Let us then employ terror, and obtain the glorious title of founders of the republic; let us use

our courage, unite our strength, and employ our information; let us, by heating the minds of the people, prepare the stomachs of Kings for a dish of democracy, after our own seasoning; and if we *must* die, let us die; but, like proud Samson, let us shake—let us overturn the fragile columns of the edifice we have assisted to construct. The government of the revolution can only be a despotism of liberty against tyranny. By whose agency is this necessary end then to be effected? I answer, that its success depends absolutely on the character of the representatives, in whose zeal, fidelity, and prudence, we are to confide. *Our* destiny, and that of the whole world, is mainly attached to the choice of our new legislators, for to them the good of our country, our greatest interests, will be entrusted. It is, in my opinion, a great misfortune that the nomination has been delayed, giving time to the enemies of liberty to form cabals against us. We must repair these inconveniences. We must, above all things, in our choice avoid those enemies of liberty who shelter themselves under the veil of order and of peace—who call order that system which best suits their purposes; who decorate with the name of peace the repose of corpses and the silence of the tomb!"

The President's speech, which was of considerably greater length than the extracts we have inserted above, was received with thunders of applause. D'Orville spoke next in the same strain. He had

determined to seize the moment of gratified vanity for preferring his request to Robespierre, and accordingly, when at a late hour the meeting broke up, he joined him on their way homewards. "You have surpassed yourself to-night," said he, to the President, as together they threaded their way through the dimly-lighted streets; "Your eloquence was absolutely overpowering."

"The magnitude of the subject inspired me," answered Robespierre, carelessly—"Nay, it would have inspired a stone, or even the dull brain of Capet himself, had he sense or feeling to spare a thought from his own ill-gotten pleasures and luxuries. Every thing turns upon these same elections. The whole success of our revolution is bound up in them. I reckon upon *you*, D'Orville, as my most trusty coadjutor; for this ill-judged delay in the nomination leaves us no time for half-measures."

"Our worthy President already knows my leading maxims," said D'Orville, "that the true secret of success is comprised within two words—'To dare'—that that which constitutes a republic is the destruction of whatever is opposed to it, and that mercy to its opposers is a crime against the republic itself. These are the laws I have laid down for myself, and he shall find me not backward in enforcing them."

"They are well imagined," answered Robespierre; "and if strictly adhered to in the present crisis, may lead to the most salutary results."

"I am aware," answered D'Orville, that on this, our first struggle, depends the success or failure of our glorious cause—that we must use all means firmly to plant the standard of liberty, or perish in the attempt. But we must have well-disciplined and courageous soldiers to fight our battles against tyranny, and it was on this subject I was desirous of consulting you. Have you yet fixed on a Deputy for the town of Boulogne?"

"None;" answered the President.

"Will you then accept my uncle, the *ci-devant* Baron de St. Croix; and trust to my assertion of his fitness for the post?"

"Humph!" said Robespierre, his suspicious nature in a moment aroused. "An aristocrat! I like not those *ci-devant* nobles, D'Orville. Our dish of liberty and equality is too hard for their pampered digestion."

"Nay," rejoined his companion, "you forget that Orleans himself is our most staunch and zealous advocate."

"Orleans is too marked a character; too publicly involved in the cause of the people," answered the President, "to be able to retrace his steps with impunity. His interest—his very life is in our keeping. This uncle of yours has no such pledge at stake. We must weigh well his motives, since the cause of half our ills, consists in the politics of those aristocrats, who, disguised under the mask of patriotism, are secretly connected

with the rest of their class only to surprise its confidence.”*

“ I pledge myself for my uncle’s zeal and sincerity,” said D’Orville; “ nevertheless, if you desire to be more intimately acquainted with his principles and opinions, I have received a letter detailing them, which I will put into your possession. You may retain it to be produced against him, should future circumstances require it.”

They had now reached the Rue St. Honoré, where, in a small hired apartment, the future despot of the reign of terror then resided. As the dim light of the lamp fell on the countenances of the two republican leaders, they would have formed a curious and interesting study to the physiognomist. D’Orville was scarcely twenty-four years of age. His stern, but handsome Roman features expressed the uncompromising inflexibility, and daring courage, which made him valuable to the President, as one ever ready to act, and who thought all means expedient, provided they were necessary to obtain his ends. Maximilien Robespierre was several years older. Below the middle size, without grace or proportion, his figure was rendered still more ungainly by an habitual convulsive movement of the neck, eyes, hands, and shoulders. His countenance was livid, and devoid of expression ; and when we add his coarse manners, harsh voice, sardonic

* Robespierre’s own words.

laugh, and provincial accent, the *tout ensemble* will perhaps form a picture of the most unpleasing aspect. He affected to be careful in his dress ; retained the use of hair powder, though the faction to which he belonged was distinguished for having abandoned it ; and even, we are informed, indulged profusely in the aristocratic use of scents and perfumes. Ambition, cowardice, dissimulation, and the love of pleasure, were the leading features of his character. To these may be added vanity—and suspicion, which prompted him to destroy even his best friends when they became no longer useful to his purposes. His ambition led him to choose the only path by which a poor advocate of Arras could hope to emerge from his obscurity. His cowardice induced him to avoid all responsibility, by adroitly making it appear that every defined proposition, and active interference proceeded from others. His dissimulation procured for him, among his own party, the unmerited character of an incorruptible patriot ; and his poverty, on which rested his reputation for disinterestedness, sprang from the love of pleasure, on which he profusely lavished the sums of money that passed through his hands. It has been asserted that Robespierre delighted less in blood as an object, than as a means—that the system of government which he designed to establish was pure, but impracticable. Whether many will be found to subscribe to this opinion, is very doubtful. That his motives, and the means which he employed to gratify them, were equally inexcusable for any ultimate good—

that he would, unhesitatingly, have sacrificed three-fourths of the French people, to realize to the rest his theoretical system of government, all must allow. It is, however, believed by many, that the reign of terror that ceased at his death, would equally have done so had he lived and triumphed.

CHAPTER XIV.

“ When forc’d from those we love to part,
What could assuage our sorrow,
Did hope not whisper to the heart,
Perhaps you’ll meet to-morrow ?”

R. R.

THE Chevalier, or, (as he now chose with republican simplicity to designate himself,) the *citoyen* D’Orville, very little imagined that each day of old Pierre’s protracted stay in Paris, served only to strengthen the barrier to the proposed marriage with his cousin, of the very existence of which he was yet ignorant. It will readily be believed, that in the interim De Clermont’s visits to the Hotel Beaumont, were neither less frequent, nor less welcome than formerly. To Madame de Beaumont alone, since the arrival of the Baron de St. Croix’ letter, did they occasion any uneasiness. Not that she supposed the Baron could object to the young Count de Clermont as a husband for his daughter, neither did she believe that the allusions, contained in his letter, to Adèle’s

future prospects, had more than a general reference. Still, it might be otherwise; and were it so, she was too little acquainted with his character to form any opinion as to what course he would pursue, between his daughter's affections and his own wishes. As matters now stood, it was, however, too late to retract. The affections of the young lovers were irrevocably engaged; and Madame de Beaumont perceived her indiscretion in having permitted their frequent intercourse, unsanctioned by the approval of Adèle's father, only when it was too late to remedy the error. She could but trust, therefore, to the Count de Clermont's high claims to consideration, and to the regard she believed the Baron must have for his child's happiness, to bring about the only result which was likely to promote it. In this manner things went on, till the day on which Robespierre received the Baron's letter; and, in return for the pledge, gave the promise of his support in the approaching election. Old Pierre hastened to inform Madame de Beaumont that he was ready to start at Mademoiselle's earliest convenience, and it was agreed that in two days Adèle should set out.

Every one who has parted from dear and valued friends for an indefinite period, remembers the painful eve of departure, when each moment is treasured up, and the memory is perpetually taxed for another, and another something to be said or told, that must not be forgotten. Lengthen them out, and linger as we will, such, as well as happier evenings must have

an end—and so did this; and Alphonse at length departed to a sleepless pillow, and Adèle to one of tears. She was to start soon after day-break on the morrow, for travelling in those days, even upon the best roads in France, was but a tiresome and tedious pilgrimage. Long before the appointed time, Alphonse de Clermont was again at the Hotel Beaumont, and within an hour all was ready for the departure. We will pass over the sorrowful adieus at the moment of parting; the tears of Adèle, and the blessings of Madame de Beaumont; the promises of tidings to be given, and the hopes of ere long meeting once again, that we may prepare to accompany Adèle upon her journey. Her only companions were Old Pierre, and an elderly waiting woman; and it was a relief, when, on the third evening, they reached Boulogne, and the young heiress of Audenach found herself entering what was henceforth to be her home. Uncertain of the reception that she, an almost stranger, was likely to meet, with a beating heart she traversed the corridor that conducted to her father's library. As she entered, he rose from the huge leathern chair in which he was seated at a table covered with papers, engaged in writing. The Baron would have been less than human could he have looked upon the beautiful girl who broke in upon his occupation, without an emotion of pleasure. As she advanced timidly into the apartment, he came forward to meet her, and imprinting a kiss upon her forehead, bade her welcome to Audenach. The words

were kind, and yet there was something in their tone that fell coldly on the heart of Adèle. They were so unlike those to which she had been accustomed: the cold ceremonious salutation of her father was so different to the greeting she had anticipated. She felt that in a similar case, Madame de Beaumont would have clasped her to her heart! A few enquiries as to her journey—a few wishes that Audenach might possess sufficient *agréments* to recompense her in some sort for those she had left behind, and the Baron, having expressed his fear that she needed repose, dismissed her to her chamber. There, she had to endure the scrutiny of a new *soubrette*, for her travelling companion was too tired, or too deeply engaged in the relation of all she had seen in her trip to Paris, to attend for that night upon the “*pauvre petite*,” of whom she was giving a detailed description to her curious listeners in the servant’s hall.

“And this, then, is to be my home,” thought Adèle, as left at last to solitude, she buried her face in her pillow, and burst into an agony of tears. “This is the reality of the change I have so dreaded: and yet,” she mentally continued, in self-reproach at the first half-ungracious thought, “can I wonder at my father’s coldness—dare I blame his constrained manner to *me*, who am almost a stranger in my home. I will cheer his solitude—I will win his love—I will seek to deserve the reward, ere I can hope to obtain it;” and, pleased with the task of filial affection she had imposed upon herself, Adèle fell

asleep. Could she have divined that the Baron's considerate dismissal originated not in his anxiety to procure her the repose she needed, but in the desire of gratifying his own impatient curiosity as to the result of Pierre's mission, she would have perceived how hopeless was the task. It is sometimes fortunate for our happiness, that the fabled Palace of Truth is but a fabric of the fancy, woven of a tissue that belongs not to the things of earth—but Heaven ! For how deeply would our self-love be often wounded, could we penetrate the motives of those who appear the most eagerly to devote themselves to our interests, or amusement—how mortifying would be the conviction, were the springs of their conduct laid bare before us, stripped of the garb in which our vanity is ever willing to invest them !

The moment his daughter had retired, the Baron de St. Croix broke the seal of the packet which lay before him. Its contents were highly gratifying. D'Orville communicated to him the purport of the President's answer, and consented to receive the price at which it had been purchased. One sentence only puzzled the Baron :—"Are you acquainted with Madame de Beaumont's nephew, the young Count de Clermont ?" D'Orville said no more. There was no comment made—no reason given for the enquiry. The intentions of the writer were, nevertheless, fulfilled. His uncle's suspicions were aroused, and without delay he summoned Pierre, in order to make such enquiries respecting Madame de Beaumont's

household, as might serve to elucidate the mystery. Pierre's residence under the same roof had enabled him to be perfectly acquainted with De Clermont's daily visits, for which the gossip of the servant's hall was not slow in assigning a cause. Drawing his own conclusions from the information he had artfully contrived to extract from his domestic, the Baron, when on the following day he penned his answer to D'Orville's communication, failed not to convey his suspicions with regard to De Clermont, accompanied by an injunction to his nephew, to act as circumstances might require. This was precisely as D'Orville wished. De Clermont's return to Court, together with the favourable notice of the Queen, had recalled him to the recollection of the revolutionary party, as one of the heroes of the 6th of October. The consideration in which he was held by the royalists, and the qualities he was known to possess, rendered him an object of hatred and distrust; and they desired nothing better than to involve him in any quarrel which should either force him to quit Paris, or enable them to dispose of him in any manner which might more readily present itself. Intent upon effecting this desirable object, D'Orville determined to seek an interview with De Clermont; and on the following day, he accordingly presented himself at his hotel, in the Rue St. Honoré. But the meeting of the two young men must be reserved for another chapter.

CHAPTER XV.

"Rancour has often darken'd reason's eye,
And judgment winks, when passion holds the scale."

Earl of Essex.

As the Count de Clermont and the Chevalier D'Orville now stood face to face, they would have formed, perhaps, as fine a study for the painter's pencil as an artist could have desired. They were of equal age and size ; both gifted with manly beauty and noble birth ; both rich in intellectual endowments, and yet, with these similar qualifications, how striking was the contrast between them. D'Orville wore the thick curls of his black Brutus head unpowdered, in token that he was a Jacobin. The expression of his coal black eye told less of pride than of daring defiance ; and in his dress and manners he had adopted the coarse, careless fashion of those with whom he now habitually associated. De Clermont, on the contrary, had retained the rich costume of the *vielle cour*, and with it the polished,

courtly address that befitted his rank and station. His dark blue eye spoke the language of pride, but it was the pride of conscious rectitude; and a tone of repose pervaded the whole of his fine features, which was wanting in those of his companion. Each of the young men was perfectly acquainted with the person of the other, though they now spoke together for the first time; both held a distinguished place in the party to which they respectively belonged; and both, (though with far different motives,) aspired to the hand of the beautiful heiress of Audenach.

"I believe I am addressing Monsieur de Clermont," said D'Orville, as he entered the apartment. De Clermont bowed.

"I am at a loss to conjecture," said he, motioning his visitor to a seat, "to what circumstance I am indebted for the honour of a visit from Monsieur D'Orville."

"Probably," said the Jacobin, taking the proffered chair, and seating himself with careless insolence, exactly facing his companion; "probably Monsieur de Clermont may find the mystery more easily explained, if I announce myself as the near relative of Mademoiselle de St. Croix."

De Clermont started, for he had been previously unaware of Adèle's relationship with the celebrated revolutionary leader now before him.

"I am equally unable," he said, colouring slightly, "to divine the nature of any communication *Monsieur D'Orville* can have to impart to me;" and De Clermont

laid a particular emphasis upon the words, "Monsieur D'Orville."

"I am come, Sir," said D'Orville, fixing his keen glance upon De Clermont as he spoke, "rather to receive, than to impart information. Of what nature you will perhaps more readily understand, if I demand it in the character of the affianced husband of Mademoiselle de St. Croix."

"The affianced husband of Mademoiselle de St. Croix!" interrupted De Clermont, drawing back in unfeigned amazement, and feeling at the same time more than half tempted, and wholly willing to disbelieve the assertion of his rival. "It is somewhat singular, Sir," continued he, unguardedly, "that the young lady herself should have been ignorant of such an engagement."

"It is still more singular," said D'Orville, with the most provoking coolness, "that my cousin should have thought it necessary to inform Monsieur de Clermont, whether such was, or was not the case."

"Monsieur D'Orville," said De Clermont, while by a strong effort he mastered his rising indignation at the insolent tone of his companion, "You have given me to understand that you came hither to obtain information which it was in my power to impart; but you have hitherto thought fit to deal so largely in the language of mystery, that I have been unable to discover to what result your inquiries may tend. As you seem disposed to insinuate that Mademoiselle de St. Croix has been guilty of an

indiscretion, in making *me* the depositary of a secret, of which I feel quite persuaded she was herself utterly ignorant, it were better I should at once inform you, that in *my* presence, at least, your name has never passed her lips ; and further I will venture to assert that your cousin is perfectly incapable, at all times, of betraying any confidence that had been reposed in her. If, sir," continued De Clermont rising, "you came hither to receive the assurance which I have just given, the purport of your visit is, I conclude, fulfilled."

"Far from it, Sir," answered D'Orville, still remaining seated ; "I have other intentions to fulfil ; other—and more important demands for your consideration, the result of which I am indeed prepared to anticipate, from your readiness to throw down the gauntlet as the champion of my cousin."

"It is at least fortunate for Mademoiselle de St. Croix," said De Clermont, reddening, "that she has some more zealous advocate than you, Monsieur D'Orville, who have proclaimed yourself her rightful protector, seem willing to prove. But we waste words, Sir. Allow me to remind you—"

"That I came hither," interrupted D'Orville, in a tone of insolent defiance, "to claim the renunciation of that of which, if common report speaks truly, Monsieur de Clermont has sought to deprive me. How far your ill-founded pretensions to my cousin's hand and fortune may have led you in your hopeless pursuit, or in what manner your assiduities may have

been received, is a matter of small importance, considering that the affair is definitively arranged between the Baron de St. Croix and myself."

"I must beg leave to differ from you, Sir," said De Clermont warmly ; "whatever concerns Mademoiselle de St. Croix, is a matter of importance in my opinion, and ought to be so in yours. By what title you arrogate to yourself the right of passing censure, either upon her conduct or mine, I have yet to learn. For myself, I am responsible for my actions only to God and to my Sovereign—and for your cousin, I must believe that she is at liberty to bestow her confidence and regard upon whom, and in what degree, she thinks proper, without reference to an engagement with which she is wholly unacquainted, and of the existence of which you must afford some stronger proof than any you have yet thought fit to produce, ere you venture to assume the right with which such an engagement might be supposed to invest you."

"Do you mean then to insinuate," exclaimed D'Orville, fiercely,—

"I mean, Monsieur D'Orville, that you should hear me to an end," interrupted De Clermont, with calmness. "You have proclaimed an engagement with Mademoiselle de St. Croix, while, at the same time, you profess a total disregard for her feelings upon the subject : you have presumed to blame the conduct of one, upon whose spotless name the breath of censure had never before rested. That I have been honoured

with your cousin's good opinion, I am proud to acknowledge ; but you would do well to remember, that I have been permitted to share her society only under the roof, and with the sanction of the guardian expressly chosen by the Baron de St. Croix, as eminently fitted to undertake so precious a charge as that of his only daughter. I imagine that Madame de Beaumont has been quite as watchful over the interests and happiness of his child as—"

Doubtless," interrupted D'Orville, with a sneer, his lip quivering with passion, "Madame de Beaumont has acted with infinite judgment, in procuring for her nephew the good-will of the heiress of Audenach."

"Monsieur D'Orville," exclaimed De Clermont, his fine form drawn proudly up to its full height, "this is language to which I neither can, nor will submit. Whether your own motives in desiring an alliance with your cousin are so pure as to defy scrutiny, you best know. Be they as they may, I cast back your insinuations, Sir, that you may reserve them for those whose actions may be estimated by the only standard with which you appear to be acquainted. To Madame de Beaumont they are wholly inapplicable."

"Well, well," interrupted D'Orville, impatiently ; "let us leave your worthy aunt's motives to take care of themselves. It is of actions I would speak."

"In *my* mind, Sir," said De Clermont, proudly, "actions, and the motives from which they spring, are

inseparable. I regret that you should force me, beneath my own roof, to lay aside the courtesy due to a visitor, by obliging me to require an instant withdrawal or explanation of the injurious construction which you have thought fit to apply to those of Madame de Beaumont."

"As I have no inclination to grant either," said D'Orville, coolly rising from the chair in which he had hitherto remained seated, "I must beg leave to decline acceding to your request. Any other satisfaction which you are desirous of obtaining, I am perfectly willing to afford. There is my address, Sir," he added, throwing a card upon the table; "in the mean time, I have the honour of wishing you a good morning."

So saying, and without waiting for a reply, the revolutionary chief strode from the apartment.

De Clermont stood for some minutes in equal surprise and indignation at the insolent tone and bearing of his late visitor. But he quickly remembered that the present moment was not one for the indulgence of inactivity, and casting himself into a chair, he commenced a mental recapitulation of the conversation in which he had just borne a part. He endeavoured to recall his own words, that he might examine whether any thing he had uttered could afford just provocation for the insulting language and manner adopted by D'Orville; but he was unable to discover a single word which could justify his rival's conduct, and was forced to end with the conclusion,

that the Jacobin had sought him only for the purpose of entangling him in some quarrel, whether from private or political motives, he was unable to decide—it might be from both combined. In any case, he could not fail deeply to regret the consequences which must ensue from his late interview, and which he foresaw were wholly unavoidable. In the present fermented state of public opinion, his collision with the Jacobin leader might be productive of serious evil, and De Clermont knew that his own personal enemies, and those of the whole royalist party, would not fail to turn the circumstance, if possible, to their own advantage. Then, with respect to his private feelings, how painful were the reflections that had been called forth! Could it be that Adèle de St. Croix was, indeed, secretly betrothed to her cousin—that the destiny of the gentle being in whom centred his best hopes of earthly happiness—who had pledged her faith with his, was in the remotest degree connected with that of the fiery leader of the revolutionary club of the Jacobins?

That Adèle herself was ignorant of any such engagement he was quite persuaded; but De Clermont was well aware that it was no very uncommon occurrence for a contract of marriage to be concluded, without any previous intimation to one of the principal parties concerned, whose acquiescence was only required as the moment approached for fulfilling it. Were this the case in the present instance, (and he could scarcely believe that D'Orville would have

ventured to make the assertion without at least some future prospect of its probability,) De Clermont foresaw, with pain, how many obstacles might oppose themselves to his hoped-for union with Adèle, and how trying might be the situation in which she would find herself placed. Being wholly unacquainted with the character and principles of the Baron de St. Croix, he could form no judgment as to the line of conduct he was likely to pursue towards his daughter, and De Clermont, therefore, determined to consult Madame de Beaumont on the subject, without, however, informing her of the particulars of his extraordinary interview with the Chevalier D'Orville, by whom her own conduct towards Adèle and the motives which prompted it, had been so grossly and so wantonly misrepresented. But De Clermont felt that it was not to the Hotel Beaumont, that his steps must be first directed. The interview of the morning had prior claims upon his attention, and he accordingly determined to seek the abode of a friend, to whose judgment he purposed entrusting the management of his quarrel with his insolent rival.

CHAPTER XVI.

"Slaying is the word ; it is a deed of fashion."

Shakspeare.

As D'Orville quitted the Hotel Clermont, and pursued his way homeward along the Rue St. Honoré, his heart bounded with a fiendish exultation at the success with which his diabolical project had been crowned. He had not only managed to engage De Clermont in a quarrel from which he would find it extremely difficult to extricate himself, but he had likewise artfully contrived, that the royalist should be the first to throw down the gauntlet, at least as far as appearances went. As the interview had been without witnesses, it would be easy, by indirect allusions, to exonerate himself from blame, and to transfer it, in some degree, to his antagonist. It was his aim, in fact, to make the quarrel appear one of a political character, by which means De Clermont would not only augment the rancour of the revolutionary party, but probably would also incur the censure of his own ;

and as D'Orville felt persuaded that the Count de Clermont would endure much, rather than expose the delicate subject of their controversy to the idle gossip of public opinion, the Jacobin felt tolerably secure of the ultimate success of his deep-laid scheme. Deep-laid, truly it was—for it was mainly by such concealed and complicated machinery, that the great wheel of the revolution was destined to be kept in motion.

D'Orville was aroused from the long train of reflections to which his visit to the Hotel Clermont had given rise, by receiving a friendly *accolade* upon the shoulder, from a person whose vicinity his abstraction had prevented his noticing. The unpowdered locks and negligent apparel of the individual who had thus accosted him, sufficiently marked the party to which he belonged; and the unequivocal expression of his countenance as strongly indicated that he was no unworthy member of the democratical fraternity. Those acquainted with the sanguinary history of the times, will not fail to recognize, in the person above mentioned, the crafty leader of the Jacobin faction—the atrocious and blood-thirsty Duval.

“Whither so fast, *mon cher*,” exclaimed he, as D'Orville turned sharply round; “is your mission of vast importance, that it calls for such speed?”

“Why, truly, no;” answered D'Orville, laughing, and slackening his pace to that of his companion; “my thoughts and wishes, indeed, were proceeding with wonderful velocity, for you know I never seek

to check their flight. As to my steps, I was urging them towards your own dwelling, my good Duval, having determined to crave your assistance in a short drama which is probably about to be enacted. May I reckon upon your friendship?"

"Without asking what it is that you require of me, to *you*, I may venture to say—yes, D'Orville; for we understand each other," answered Duval. "It is not to every man I would give the same unconditional pledge."

"You are at liberty to withdraw it, should the affair be not pleasing to you," said D'Orville; "but we must not discuss it here. Will you dine with me, and we can talk the matter over?"

"*Volontiers.*"

"*Allons donc,*" said D'Orville; and the two friends, turning into a narrow street which conducted to the Boulevards, threaded the motly and bustling crowd which then, as now, thronged their pathways, till they reached the apartments of the young Jacobin leader. Having together ascended the unclean staircase of a house of the second class, D'Orville applied his key to a door which admitted them into a small, unfurnished, stone-floored apartment, communicating with another, from whence they looked forth on the gay scene beneath.

"*Vive la bagatelle,*" exclaimed D'Orville; "who that looked upon yonder crowd of light-hearted fools, apparently intent only upon the display or purchase of those gaudy wares, could imagine that in the

hands of such as these, will ere long rest the destinies of this great Empire !”

“And *vive la Garde Nationale*, say I,” answered Duval. “*Parbleu* ; but our brave men of the Faux-bourgs are a glorious substitute for those chicken-hearted, disbanded Body Guards.”

“*Pour cela mon cher*,” said D’Orville ; “I believe we have done wisely to disperse those same Body Guards. They might have given us some trouble else, for they won their death warrant bravely on the 6th of October.”

“Ah ! bah ! Bravery in a bad cause is worse than cowardice,” said Duval. “Where was the merit of saving the Austrian from the fate that was intended for her, only to give *us* the trouble of administering the dose in some other form ?”

“The merit was great, my good Duval,” said D’Orville ; “inasmuch as it taught us the necessity of placing the Royal puppets under more trusty guardianship. But come, dinner waits, and we shall spoil our digestion over this discussion of ours. When we have finished our repast, I have other food for your consideration.”

The meal was frugal, for D’Orville, unlike his friend Robespierre, was somewhat Spartan in his tastes and habits. He flattered himself, indeed, that it was on the model of the Lacedemonian character he had formed his own ; but the qualities which were virtues in the original, became vices in the imitation, from the very excess to which they were carried.

Thus his daring courage degenerated into ferocity—his love of liberty into licentiousness; and his hatred for all that was slothful or effeminate, into contempt for whatever was elegant or refined. Perhaps the annals of the French Revolution can furnish few instances of more hardened villany than those which marked the career of the *ci-devant* Chevalier D'Orville.

"Now for business," said the younger Jacobin, when they had ended their repast; "that I may know whether I am to reckon upon you, or to seek a coadjutor elsewhere."

"I have pledged myself," said Duval.

"But you shall be free to withdraw your pledge if you prefer doing so," answered D'Orville. "The only promise I exact, is that of secrecy."

"Granted."

"Well, then," said D'Orville, with the utmost coolness, "will you help me to shoot a royalist through the head, and to brave the penalty afterwards." The suddenness and atrocity of the proposition would have shaken a less worthy scion of the democratical tree; but Duval heard it unmoved.

"I am yours for half a dozen such," said he, chuckling; "providing always the object be worthy, and the means secure."

"The Count de Clermont—and a political duel," said D'Orville, laconically.

"What—he who defended the Queen's anti-chamber on the 6th of October?"

"The same. He did us no good office upon that

occasion, and is very likely to perform the same part again, should an opportunity offer; so we may as well put it out of his power, by disposing of him in a quiet way. Eh, Duval?"

"Aye;" said Duval, musingly.

"The aristocratic mode," added D'Orville, laughing, "that I have chosen for his exit, may perhaps reconcile him to it."

"The object is well enough," said Duval, gravely; "but the means appear to me not quite so easy."

"Means," said D'Orville; "what would you have but a steady aim, and a good bullet, with,"—

"But what leads to this?" interrupted Duval, pettishly; "there must be a quarrel, a challenge, unless, indeed,"—

"All prepared—arranged—done," exclaimed D'Orville, triumphantly, striking the table with violence with his open palm; "nothing remaining but to fix time and place, and then,"—he snapped his fingers expressively, for the conclusion of the sentence.

Duval's small grey eyes twinkled with pleasure as he raised them from the smouldering wood fire on which they had rested, to the coal black orbs of his companion, now glittering with the fierceness of a demon.

"We may expect the friendly message every moment," added D'Orville. "The whole affair was arranged in half-an-hour this morning. I scarcely hoped that so short a time would have sufficed to entangle the cool headed De Clermont."

"And the cause?"

"An old woman;" said D'Orville, bursting into loud laughter. "Some aunt of his, of whom I took the liberty of speaking somewhat more disrespectfully than his dainty ears could listen to. He will send to demand an explanation. You will, in my name, refuse it. We shall meet in the Bois de Boulogne—and I shall be so very unfortunate as to shoot him through the head. You know I never miss my aim."

"And suppose he chooses to return the compliment?" said Duval.

"Oh, I must take my chance for that," answered D'Orville; "but I shall be tolerably secure—De Clermont is too great a fool to take direct aim; besides, *you* will arrange the hour and place of meeting, so as to give me every advantage."

"And suppose, by choosing the hour of dusk, you happen, for the first time, to miss your mark," rejoined Duval.

"If my shot fails, another will scarcely do so," said D'Orville, in a lower tone; "for our good city of Paris is not wanting in true and trusty marksmen ready and willing to do the state a good turn. Besides, the Bois de Boulogne is, in some parts, tolerably sheltered, and we may as well, you know, like the Spartan, fight in the shade."

"Humph!" said Duval, musingly.

"The same moment can wing two shafts as well as one," continued D'Orville; "*you* must arrange the

points from whence they are to fly. I will engage to provide them. You understand me?"

"Aye," said Duval, his eyes still fixed thoughtfully on the now blazing logs of wood, which ever and anon illumined the apartment with their bright and flickering light. "D'Orville," he added, after a short pause, "let us beware that this fiery courage of yours is not leading us beyond the barrier of prudence. If you can ensure success, all will be well; but failure will inevitably entail difficulty upon ourselves, and perhaps ruin to the good cause."

"To dare, is my motto," said D'Orville; "and I can find none better to supply its place. We can gain nothing without some risk."

"But are you provided with this trusty assistant of whom you spoke?" returned Duval. "Paris contains many an able marksman; but where is the man whose fidelity can be relied on in an affair of this nature?"

"Trust all that to me," said D'Orville; "I promise that you shall be satisfied."

"And De Clermont's second; how we shall contrive to keep *him* quiet?"

"No need," said D'Orville. "If a man provoke a quarrel, he may expect to suffer for it. As to any random shot that may chance to hit him, *we* are not to be blamed for that; and the person that aims it will, for his own sake, keep out of the way. What proof can they produce against us? and even if they could, we are strong enough to defy them."

In this manner the worthy pair continued their disgusting discussion, while they awaited, with eager impatience, the hoped-for arrival of De Clermont's message. In any details he choose to give, D'Orville, however, carefully avoided every allusion to his cousin. It was by no means his wish that his proposed marriage should be made the theme of conversation at the moment he had obtained the concurrence of Robespierre in his uncle's election, for he was aware, that the President's suspicious nature would immediately take the alarm, and possibly lead to a scrutiny which might prevent both the one and the other. He, therefore, determined that the public should refer his quarrel with De Clermont to a wholly political cause, though, in fact, his hatred to his opponent, and his desire to be freed from his rivalry, originated quite as much in feelings of a more private nature. Adèle de St. Croix, as heiress of Audenach, was too rich a prize to be lightly hazarded against De Clermont's possible better fortune ; and D'Orville, therefore, with sordid interest, determined to ensure the possession of her valuable estates, let the price at which they were purchased be what it might.

CHAPTER XVII.

“Yet reason tells us, parents are o’erseen,
When with too strict a rein they do hold in
Their child’s affection, and control that love
Which the high powers divine inspire them with.”

WHILE these events were passing in Paris, the innocent cause of such consummate villany was pursuing the weary, hopeless task which she had imposed upon herself at Boulogne. Day after day did Adèle tax her invention to discover some mark of affectionate attention that might be acceptable to her father; but it almost invariably happened that every little project of kindness died a natural death, from lack of opportunity to call it into action. The Baron, indeed, scarcely saw his daughter except at the stated hours appointed for their meals, and even then his words were so few, and his manner so chilling, that poor Adèle could rarely summon courage to break through the icy reserve which existed between them. The rest of his time, he was either

shut up in his library, engaged in writing, or absent in the neighbouring town of Boulogne, where he now regularly attended the meeting of the Jacobin club, of which he had become one of the most distinguished orators. These meetings were held, at the period in question, in a building, the curiously-varied appropriation of which is not perhaps generally known. It was once a Jesuit's church; afterwards it became the hall of the Jacobin club; and it is in the present day used as the public riding-school of the town! Every one who is acquainted with the gay little sea-port, will remember the Manège in the Grande Rue. Within its walls, in 1791, a revolutionary mob held their meetings; and under pretence of discussing the passing events of the period, prepared the minds of the people to receive the list of proscriptions drawn up by the infuriated monsters in their secret assemblies. There too, the *ci-devant* Baron de St. Croix launched forth his invectives against royalty, and his bombastic encomiums on liberty and equality. Frequently these meetings were protracted till a very late hour, and De St. Croix only returned to Audenach long after his daughter had retired to rest. Poor Adèle's days were spent, therefore, in almost uninterrupted solitude. No visitor ever approached the house, save a few ill-looking men, with whose business she was unacquainted, and who came and went, having seen only her father. With the Baron's household, meanwhile, she had become a universal favourite. She had a kind word

and a smile for all; the old gardener consulted her about his flowers; the waiting maids contrived to purloin the pattern of her Parisian sleeves. Sometimes, (but not often,) the sound of her guitar enlivened the monotony of Audenach; and as to old Pierre, and the housekeeper who had accompanied her from Paris, they both protested that "*Mademoiselle was absolument un ange.*" As to Adèle herself, she could only endeavour to extract some portion of happiness from the very slender materials afforded by her present situation; but she found the task both difficult and painful. The affection which she had been prepared to bestow on her only parent, seemed driven coldly back to its source, and she vainly waited in the expectation that its current might be allowed to flow on in the thousand kindnesses which her warm heart had been accustomed to lavish on those she loved. But time wore on, and brought no change; and by degrees, hope, that had been once so bright and beautiful, faded like a dim vision, and at last vanished quite away.

It is to be hoped, for the happiness of mankind, that characters like that of the Baron de St. Croix are of very rare occurrence; for the parent, who, by his sternness, destroys the confidence that ought to exist between himself and his child, tears from both, one of the most exquisite enjoyments of which our nature is capable. The parent is deprived of those tender and beautiful consolations which a child only can bestow—the child becomes, too frequently, the

loser in purity of heart and correctness of conduct. Driven from the monitor whom Heaven and his own heart would have chosen for him, he is led to seek for counsel at the hands of those whom chance may cast in his path, and who are often as unskilled in judgment and experience as himself. Those only who have had knowledge of it, can conceive the bliss of being permitted freely to deposit every thought, and hope and fear, in the bosom of a beloved and sympathizing parent. Such an union is the very perfection of friendship. *It is, perhaps, the only species of earthly love, whose elements are all of Heaven—whose duties are but a type of the higher and still holier homage we pay to Him, who hath condescended to call us “His children;” and hath permitted us to address Him as “Our Father !”*

There was one person in the Baron's family who regarded Adèle with a deeper attachment than that of an ordinary domestic. He was the son of the farmer under whose roof her years of infancy had been passed. The same mother had nursed both; and though long years had separated them, Felix Noel still retained the affectionate remembrance of his beautiful little foster-sister. He had become an inmate of the mansion at Audenach some two or three years before Adèle's arrival, but the Baron had failed in exciting the respectful attachment which was still conceded, unsought, to his distant daughter; and Felix had been induced, without much difficulty, to forfeit his fidelity to his master in favour of Marie

de Théricourt, whose influence over the minds of the lower classes has been already noticed. He it was who had given her the meeting in the valley of Audenach, and through his agency she was made acquainted with all the events which subsequently occurred. Whatever could be gleaned from the communicativeness of the two domestics who had been sent to Paris, was also conveyed by Felix to Marie; and from the information thus obtained, her singularly quick sagacity was enabled, at a single glance, to penetrate the whole mystery, and to form a correct estimate of the Baron's selfish and stubborn disregard for his daughter.

"Will you spare me one of your roses, Toinon?" said Adèle, as she stood one morning on the upper step of the stone flight, which was level with the first story of the mansion, and leaned over the iron balustrade, at the foot of which the old gardener was busied with his favourite roses and honeysuckles, whose rich clusters had twined themselves upwards, in graceful fragrance, towards a flower even lovelier than themselves. The old man raised his head towards the fair girl who had addressed him; then, stooping down, he carefully selected a small *bouquet* of his richest treasures, and having arranged and tied them together, he presented them to her. "We shall have more flowers for the future," said he, "since Mademoiselle takes such pleasure in them. Heretofore there has been no one but old Toinon to

care for the sweet creatures, and a lonesome task it was to tend them. But now we will plant on the valley side, and the honeysuckle shall be trained up to Mademoiselle's boudoir window, and —"

"You will allow me some of my favourite roses, too, Toinon, will you not?" said Adèle.

"*Si, si, autant que Mademoiselle voudra,*" said Toinon. "There are none there now, but next year all shall be changed."

Poor old Toinon! How happy wert thou in thine ignorance! How little did'st thou dream that thy words were prophetic. Alas! for the vanity of human prescience!

The old man continued to tend his flowers, and detail his plans of improvement, while Adèle good-naturedly remained, that he might indulge his garrulity. Both were disturbed by a slight noise, and, looking up, the strange figure of Marie de Théricourt presented itself before their eyes. She wore the singular costume already described; the hood of her cloak being thrown back, so as entirely to discover her features. She was leaning on the iron gate which gave entrance to the gravel sweep, exactly opposite to Adèle, on whom her eyes were intently fixed, with an expression beneath which those of the maiden sank, while her heart beat faster with an undefinable sensation of terror. She became, however, in a moment, aware that there was no real cause for alarm, for Toinon merely doffed his hat to the

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singular-looking being before them, and with a "*Bon jour, Marie,*" continued his occupation and his discourse together.

Adèle would have given worlds to have made her escape from the scrutiny of her strange inquisitor, but her feet felt rooted to the spot, and she remained standing, unable either to speak or move.

"Youth, beauty, a fair fame, and an unscathed heart," muttered Marie, as she continued gazing upon the beautiful form which trembled beneath her glance. "Even such an one was Marie once, until *he* blighted all!" She lifted the latch of the iron gate, and passing through, advanced towards Adèle. "Maiden," she said, "would'st thou know the good or evil fortune Heaven hath decreed to be thy future lot?" Adèle looked up. "Thou dost doubt my skill," continued Marie. "I will tell thee of thy deeds; nay, of thy very thoughts, both past and present, that thou may'st learn to trust me for those that are to come."

"For the past," said Adèle, involuntarily awed by the manner and appearance of her strange interrogator, "thou can'st tell me only that which I know already; and for the future, I have been taught to believe it beyond mortal ken."

"But it is with no mortal eye that Marie reads the stars," said Toinon; "did she not foretell that the Baron's black mare would die when we all thought,"—

"Peace, fool;" said Marie, fiercely. "If," she

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continued, addressing herself to Adèle, "danger threatened one thou lov'st, would'st thou not warn him of it?"

Adèle made no answer, but her heart beat quicker, and a deeper colour mantled in her cheek. "Thou may'st exercise thy calling on me, if thou wilt," said she, forcing a smile, and holding out her open palm, which Marie appeared to examine attentively.

"He of whom I spoke," said the Pythoness, after a sufficient pause had been allowed for her supposed meditations, "is afar from thy presence, but his image is enshrined within thy heart. Ye have loved long and truly, but fortune smiles not on your love." She paused, then added in a more solemn tone, "Trust not to kith and kin, for treachery lurks where least ye deem of, and even now the gulf yawns beneath your feet. Maiden! if thou would'st save thyself, and one thou lov'st still better—if thou would'st hold thy best and dearest hopes—be resolute! Steel thy woman's heart against its woman's weakness, and all may still be well!"

"Thy predictions can scarce be realized," said Adèle, smiling; her interest and curiosity awakened; "for the few of my kindred who remain are unknown to me. How then can I have incurred their enmity?"

"Have I told thee truly of the past," said Marie, fixing her glance upon the face of her young auditress; which became in a moment suffused with crimson. "More it is not given thee to know; only again I say—beware of kith and kin."

So saying, the Sybil waved her hand, without waiting for further enquiry, and moving away, her figure was speedily lost amid the tall trees which overshadowed the path leading towards the valley. When sufficiently distant to be effectually screened from observation, Marie paused, and stood for some minutes with her eyes turned towards the spot she had just quitted.

“ Fortune, I thank thee !” she soliloquized ; “ though thou hast seen fit to pay the traitor in other coin than that I had made choice of. The maiden loves, and is beloved again, but not by him to whom her father seeks to wed her. What boots it to compass the destruction of yon fair and fragile thing, even though she be *his* daughter ; since within that sordid breast no human love, save that of self, had ever place. Ambition, interest, power—these are his gods, and at their shrine, friend, child, and all that man holds dear, he is prepared to sacrifice. But, Lord of Audenach, thy reward approaches ; and Marie ’tis who weaves the web that shall entrap thee. Aye !” she exclaimed aloud, her eyes fiercely glaring, and her right arm extended, “ Marie de Théricourt, thy spurned victim, thy despised slave, shall be at last avenged !”

CHAPTER XVIII.

“Honor’s a sacred tie, the law of kings,
The noble mind’s distinguishing perfection,
That aids and strengthens virtue, where it meets her,
And imitate her actions, where she is not ;
It ought not to be sported with.”

Addison.

WHEN De Clermont was left alone, after the departure of his unwelcome visitor, he sat for some time, as before related, in no very enviable frame of mind, buried in reflection upon the circumstances of his late interview with D’Orville. Persuaded as he was, that the Jacobin had sought him solely for the purpose of entangling him in some quarrel, he yet felt the impossibility of allowing his conduct to pass unnoticed, as well as the probability that his antagonist would force him to demand the fullest satisfaction. This was a step to which De Clermont felt the strongest repugnance upon every account. It would give an *éclat* to the affair which was precisely what he was desirous of avoiding ; and with respect to the

cause of the quarrel, either the name of Adèle de St. Croix must be brought before the public, and subjected to the curious and idle gossip of every saloon in Paris, or else he must submit to whatever construction the voice of common report might choose to assign to it. It was some mitigation to his regret on the subject, though none to his anxiety, that his own conduct had been wholly free from blame; and De Clermont determined, that every effort consistent with propriety, should still be made on *his* part, in order to bring the matter to an amicable conclusion. Intent upon effecting this object, he made choice of a second upon whose cool judgment and mature experience he could rely. To him, he necessarily related every thing that had passed, as well as his own opinion as to the result, in which, however, he found his friend by no means disposed to coincide.

"It is impossible," said he, when De Clermont had done speaking, "that Monsieur D'Orville can refuse to explain a few words evidently spoken in a moment of irritation, which was probably increased by his awakened jealousy of your admiration for his cousin. Think you that he really loves Mademoiselle de St. Croix?"

"Impossible," said De Clermont; "they have never even met. I believe, indeed, she is ignorant of his very existence."

"She is wealthy, perhaps?" inquired the other.

"The Baron's only child, and heiress of Audenach."

"Interest, then, may actuate him," said Monsieur De Raunaye; "but in any case, I repeat, he cannot refuse the explanation you require."

"You know him not," said De Clermont; "were it only the fear of losing Adèle's rich inheritance that had moved his spleen, Heaven knows how willingly I would resign it all, would he leave me only the treasure which is valueless to him. You will find your mission less successful than you anticipate. Interest, indeed, may influence him; but besides this, he has, believe me, deeper motives still."

"Let me hope otherwise," said de Raunaye, (as they descended the stair together). "Where shall we meet?"

"Here;" said De Clermont, who imagined that De Raunaye's nocturnal visit to his own house might excite suspicion.

"Agreed;" and the two friends parted in opposite directions: the one towards the Hotel Clermont, the other towards the dwelling of the Chevalier D'Orville.

As the two democrats were by no means desirous that De Clermont's expected messenger should find them still engaged in their ill-omened colloquy, Duval had retired ere he arrived, and D'Orville having referred every thing to him, De Raunaye accordingly followed the elder Jacobin to his dwelling. There, a protracted conference took place, the result of which the reader is prepared to anticipate. Whatever arguments his judgment or prudence could suggest, De Raunaye made use of in the hope of obtaining a

pacific termination to the affair ; but to his surprise, all his efforts proved fruitless. Duval, indeed, adroitly left him for a brief space, on the plea of consulting with D'Orville, but it was only to return with a more decidedly hostile answer than before ; and at last, no alternative remained but to appoint a place of meeting. The Bois de Boulogne was suggested and agreed to—the weapons were to be pistols—the hour of eight was appointed, and it was arranged that early on the ensuing morning the two seconds should proceed to make choice of the exact spot for the rencontre.

With a heavy heart, De Raunaye took his way back to his young friend to communicate the ill-success of his negotiation ; while Duval, with very different feelings, hastened to apprise D'Orville of what had passed.

“ *Tout va bien,*” said he, as he entered the apartment where D'Orville was awaiting his return ; “ the bait has been swallowed ; the trap is ready ; and to-morrow, at day-break, we are to select the spot in which to set it.”

“ Could you not have done so to-night ?” said D'Orville ; “ you know I too have arrangements to make which admit of no delay, and which must necessarily await your selection.”

“ Your impatience outstrips prudence, and almost possibility, *mon cher,*” answered Duval ; “ had I trusted to the darkness of night for accomplishing so

important a part of my office, your whole project might possibly have failed."

"True, true; you are right, my good Duval," answered D'Orville. He reflected a moment; then added, "day-light is as ill-suited to *my* errand, as it is necessary to the success of yours. You say you are to be abroad at sun-rise. Meet me at six, then, in the great aisle of Nôtre Dame. Your appointment in the Bois de Boulogne will have been accomplished, and I shall have with me, one, to whom it must be communicated."

"For Heaven's sake be cautious, D'Orville," said the wary Duval; "one imprudent step may entail upon us total failure, and, what would be still worse, discovery."

"Do you imagine I am a child, or a madman," said the fiery young man, in a tone of unusual impatience; "that you take me thus to task. I thought you knew me better."

"At six, then, in the great aisle of Nôtre Dame," answered Duval, without noticing his confederate's vehemence; and the unhallowed appointment was confirmed by a cordial grasp of the hand.

"Will you sup with me?" inquired the elder Jacobin.

"Impossible, I must be absent elsewhere."

The two democrats exchanged a significant glance, gave the mutual, "Good night," and parted.

No sooner was D'Orville left alone, than he

proceeded to envelope his whole person in an ample cloak, the collar of which he arranged so as effectually to conceal his features, and having drawn his hat over his eyes, and placed a small pocket pistol in his breast, the priming of which he had first carefully examined, sallied forth into the street. The Boulevards were thronged as they had been a few hours before, with the same giddy bustling crowd, save that pleasure now had usurped the place of business, and amusement was apparently the sole occupation of the hour. Groups of persons luxuriating in the balmy softness of a Parisian autumnal evening occupied the chairs which, during the morning, had been ranged in tenantless order before the doors of various *cafés*, whose brilliantly illuminated interiors now displayed numerous small tables, covered with refreshments, round which many a social knot was busily engaged, while they who composed it, either discussed the stirring news of the day or other subjects of a lighter and more convivial nature. The muffled form of D'Orville passed unheeded along the gay scene; but as he was anxious to avoid the curious gaze of any chance idler who might be so unfortunate as to be left to the unassisted fertility of his own genius to find sources of amusement, the young Jacobin turned down the first opening, and taking his way through narrow and deserted streets, he reached the Pont Royal, and passing rapidly over, found himself on the opposite bank of the Seine. Still making choice of the darkest and least

frequented passages, he continued walking at a brisk pace towards a remote part of the Fauxbourgs. From this distant quarter of the capital, life and light appeared to have almost wholly vanished. It might have been a city of the dead—for the mean, squalid habitations of which it was composed were buried in profound silence, and in almost total obscurity. The stillness of the night was unbroken by any sound, and the only light distinguishable through the darkness, was an occasional stray rush-candle, emitting its solitary and sickly glare. D'Orville, however, continued to thread the complicated windings of the place, with the confidence of one familiar with all its intricacies, 'till he reached a street, still more narrow than any he had yet passed. Here he paused, and looked round, as if to seek for some land-mark by which to direct his course; but all was dark and still. He retraced his steps to the opening by which he had entered, and then groped his way back, keeping close by the houses, and counting the number of doors till he reached that of which he was in quest. D'Orville lifted the latch, entered, and ascended the narrow nauseous staircase to a door on the second landing, at which he knocked thrice. He was answered by the sharp shrill bark of a dog, succeeded by the word "*entrez*," from a croaking female voice from within, and the next moment the democrat found himself in presence of the speaker. She was seated on a low, three-legged stool, cowering over a few ignited faggots, which were intended to

serve the purpose of a fire, the light of which was seconded only by that of a dim oil lamp, whose disagreeable odour filled the apartment. The only furniture it contained was a bed; a low screen placed so as to afford some protection against the wind, which found its way through the ill-closed door; the stool from which the old woman had arisen as D'Orville entered; and a broken chair, which she offered for his acceptance. From the small surprise she manifested at his appearance, as well as the respect she showed him, it would seem that she was neither altogether unaccustomed to such nocturnal visits, nor unaware that she was in the presence of a superior.

"Can I see your son?" inquired D'Orville, still retaining his disguise, and looking round the narrow compass of the room, in search of the person in question.

"*Nenni, nenni*;" said the old woman, cautiously; "for my son, as Monsieur may see, is out."

"And where think you can I find him; or when is he likely to return?" inquired D'Orville again.

The old woman looked curiously up, but her inquisition proved fruitless.

"Monsieur knows as much as I," she said; "my son spoke not of returning home to-night."

"I *must* see him, and that this very night;" said D'Orville impatiently. "Surely you can give me some more certain information;" and he slipped a piece of gold into the old woman's hand.

"My son has no need to tell me of his hours of coming and going," said she, deliberately looking at the coins she had received; "for he knows his old mother will keep watch for him were it till day-break. Perhaps, if Monsieur will keep me company for a while,—"

"Aye, aye;" interrupted D'Orville, perceiving that his gold had won for him the confidence which was denied to his ambiguous words and appearance. He stooped towards the stinted pile of faggots which lay beside him, and throwing a fresh bundle on the almost expiring embers, they were soon revived into a cheerful blaze.

"You shall have wherewithal to replenish your store," said D'Orville, carelessly adjusting the burning wood with the end of the thick, short staff he carried.

"How soon did you say that Giuseppe might return?" he added, in a tone of apparent indifference.

"It may be in an hour, more or less," said the old woman.

Her prognostics were, however, fulfilled sooner than she anticipated; for even as she spoke, a heavy tread was heard mounting the stair, and in a few minutes the subject of their conversation entered. D'Orville rose as he did so, and lifting his hat from his brows, just sufficiently to give the new comer a glance at his features,

"I have waited your return, Giuseppe," he said;

"for my errand brooks no delay. Where can we confer together in private?"

Without making a reply, the person addressed lifted the lamp, and leading the way, D'Orville followed him up the stair, into a small untenanted chamber, immediately above that they had quitted.

"Are we secure from eave's droppers?" demanded D'Orville.

"You may speak freely," answered his companion, in a harsh patois dialect. "My mother and myself are the sole tenants of this rat-hole."

"I have need of one who is willing at some peril to himself, to do his country a good service," said D'Orville; "and I have made choice of you, Giuseppe, as one upon whose courage and fidelity I can place the fullest reliance. Are you willing to undertake what I require, in consideration of a certain reward of which I will guarantee the payment."

"And suppose the peril should involve loss of life," growled Giuseppe; "what then is to become of the poor old crone below?"

"*My* life, not yours, will be in jeopardy," said D'Orville. "With respect to your old mother, the reward I promise will enable you to afford her, in future, more comforts than you could hope for through other means."

"I must have a written pledge," said Giuseppe, "of its fulfilment."

"Tut, tut, man," said D'Orville, impatiently; "do my word?"

"For your own sake, not while you have life to fulfil it," answered Giuseppe, bluntly. "Your's you say, will be in jeopardy, and the promises of a living man and a dead one are not equally secure."

"Well, well; I consent to your terms," said D'Orville, pettishly; "a thousand francs when the blow is struck."

"When do you require me?" growled Giuseppe.

"At the hour of eight to-morrow evening."

"To-morrow evening?" exclaimed the desperado, with a groan of disappointment; "then you must seek another to do your bidding. You said the affair must be immediate! To-morrow I shall be on the guard at the Palace."

"Surely you can exchange"—

"I tell you, no;" interrupted Giuseppe, doggedly; "I have been already reported to the President, as absent from my duty, when I was so for your pleasure only, and to-morrow's guard is one that all our men are seeking." So saying, he stooped, and, raising the lamp, was proceeding to lead the way as before.

"Stay, Giuseppe, a moment," said D'Orville, curbing his anger, on perceiving that further expostulation was hopeless. "Is the Marsellois in his old haunts?"

"Aye."

"Think you I may trust him in an affair like this?"

"As safely as you might have trusted myself,"

said Giuseppe ; “ his fidelity you have already had knowledge of, and for a steady hand and a bold heart, he has scarce his equal.”

“ Without further remark, D’Orville descended the stairs, and passing forth, pushed his way again through the dark and deserted streets. With some difficulty he found the habitation of the Marsellois. The conversation that ensued needs not to be repeated here. Suffice it to say, that the bravo willingly engaged, for the promised reward, to perform the odious task required of him.

“ At six, then, in the great aisle of Nôtre Dame,” were the words with which the democrat parted from his wretched accomplice in villany.

CHAPTER XIX.

“ Why shrinks the soul
Back on herself, and startles at destruction ?
'Tis the Divinity that stirs within us ;
'Tis Heaven itself, that points out an hereafter,
And intimates Eternity to man.”

Cato.

THE moon had risen, when D'Orville regained the banks of the Seine, whose placid stream flowed smoothly onwards in its never-ending course, unlike the current of human passion which agitated the bosom of him who now gazed on its dark waters. Every surrounding object lay mirrored upon its glassy surface, shadowing forth the dim reality in beautifully softened reflection. Save the tall dark figure of the democrat, all was calm and still, but it was the stillness, not of desolation, but of repose ; for the cold, chaste moonbeam which now poured forth its flood of silver radiance, told of refreshment to the weary spirit, and of peace to the wounded one, raising the thoughts in holy meditation, to Him who

is light, and the "Author and Giver of light." Pre-occupied as he was, and with a mind all untuned to such hallowed contemplation, the soul of D'Orville was, nevertheless, awed and struck by the mild beauty of the midnight scene. Could it be, that the heart of the meditated murderer for one moment raised itself to that God, whose all-seeing eye could penetrate his inmost thoughts, and in whose presence alone he stood? Could it be that in the universal silence that prevailed, and when all nature slept, the still small voice of conscience yet was heard, amid the communings of his heart, to whisper of an hereafter? It was even so! As D'Orville gazed upon the sculptured palaces, and varied and tasteful edifices of his native city, his eye involuntarily sought the dark broad arch of Heaven which overhung them, and his mind involuntarily acknowledged how insignificant was man, and man's greatest works, when placed in comparison with those of nature. "Of nature?" he mentally ejaculated; "If, then, her works are so exquisitely perfect, can they have been self-created? Must there not be a God of Nature? and if a God of Nature, must not that God be Eternal?"

The chain of thought sped with electric swiftiness through the mind of the Jacobin, but the struggle lasted only for a moment, for the casuist spurned the only beacon which could direct, the only support which could have borne him through the contest. The voice of the angel of mercy was drowned beneath

the fiercer cry of human pride—the whispers of conscience died away, and the demon was triumphant!

With an erect head, and a proud step, D'Orville turned from the objects upon which he had been gazing, and moved onwards towards the bridge he had traversed a few hours before. As he had now again crossed it, the clock of the Palace of the Tuileries, which lay directly before him, struck the hour of three. As many more were still wanting to that of his appointment with Duval. Passing, therefore, the Place Vendôme, he reached the now deserted Boulevards, and having arrived at his own apartments, and disencumbered himself of his disguise, he threw himself into a chair to sleep.

The bright beams of the morning sun aroused the democrat from his slumbers, and starting up, he looked anxiously at the time-piece which stood beside him. The hand pointed to a few minutes before six. D'Orville snatched his hat, and descending into the street, passed rapidly onwards towards the place of meeting. Just as he reached the cathedral of Notre Dame, the chimes struck the quarter, and entering the great aisle, he perceived the Marsellois already arrived, and awaiting him at the farthest extremity. The two confederates exchanged glances without speaking, and D'Orville then looked round in search of Duval, but he was no where to be seen. A quarter of an hour elapsed, and then another quarter, at the expiration of which, the young Jacobin exchanged

his pretended scrutiny of the monuments and statues for an impatient pacing up and down, which would probably have drawn upon him the observation, if not censure, of some of the attendants, had not his anxiety been dismissed by the hasty arrival of his second.

"Is all right?" he eagerly enquired.

"Aye," said Duval, in under tone; "but the tardy fool was past the appointed hour, and has moreover been so dainty in his choice, that I have had some trouble in arranging it. Are you prepared with him you spoke of?"

The ruffian had advanced nearer as he spoke. A single glance sufficed to point him out as the person alluded to, and a second to indicate that he should follow where his employers led. When they had reached the outer porch of the cathedral, D'Orville and Duval, to avoid suspicion, parted. The one returned towards the Fauxbourg St. Honoré; the other followed at a convenient distance by the Marsellois, led the way to the Bois de Boulogne.

As D'Orville passed the Hotel Clermont on his passage homewards, he looked up at its still unclosed windows with a fiendish sensation of pleasure, while he reflected that he who reposed within, as lord of that princely mansion, would ere another sun had dawned, be carried back to it a cold and stiffened corse. In these our happier times, it is difficult to comprehend the rancorous animosity with which the revolutionary chief was animated for his opponent.

It is still more awfully surprising, to contemplate the catalogue of human crime and deliberate villany, which marked the career of many, whose superior education, and means of improvement, though not of the first class, were yet sufficiently removed from that of the common herd, to have taught them the necessity of curbing passions, the indulgence of which, could but lead to such overwhelmingly frightful results. Among the band of demagogues who boldly set at nought whatever obstacle might chance to oppose itself to their bloody progress, D'Orville stood pre-eminent, as one whose daring courage and ready resources, had won for him the peculiar favour and good will of the President Robespierre. In the present affair he had abstained from consulting his patron, who was always unwilling to risk his interference, unless where he considered it needful; but D'Orville was well aware that he could scarcely perform a more acceptable service to him, as well as to the whole revolutionary party, than to rid them of so formidable an opponent as the young Count de Clermont, whose devotion to the Royal cause, and the wealth, influence, and talents which he possessed to support it, were all equally to be dreaded.

De Clermont, as well as his treacherous antagonist, arose earlier than was his custom on the morning which possibly might be the last of his existence, for he, too, had arrangements to make, though of a very different nature, preparatory to the evening's rencontre. He had determined on not seeing Madame

de Beaumont that day. On the following, however, he hoped to do so, when he should be able freely to tell her all that had passed, and to seek her counsel as to the best course to be pursued with respect to Adèle. He was, however, quite aware that a less fortunate termination to the affair was not unlikely. D'Orville was notoriously the best shot in all Paris; and though De Clermont was far from attributing to him the diabolical intentions with which he was really actuated, it seemed very improbable that the Jacobin would abstain from venting his hostility, and at the same time evincing his skill upon such an occasion. Under this impression, De Clermont passed several hours of the morning in writing. He addressed a letter to Madame de Beaumont, detailing his interview with D'Orville, and imploring her, should he fall in the rencontre to which it had given rise, to watch over the happiness of Adèle—to soothe the regret which he could not deny himself the consolation of believing she would experience at his loss, and above all things, to prevent, if possible, her union with her cousin. The envelope contained also a letter for Adèle herself. In it De Clermont poured forth the expression of his feelings with all the fervour the circumstances of the case might be supposed to inspire. He spoke of their hoped-for re-union, and of the happy prospect it held forth; which had alone cheered him since their parting. He touched lightly on the subject of his quarrel with D'Orville, for he rightly judged that the blow would be sufficiently

severe, without the additional pain which the whole details might produce. Finally, should it not be permitted them to meet again in that world which had held forth to both so many promises of hoped-for happiness, he besought her to seek for consolation where alone it could be found; and to dwell upon his memory only as that of one departed to a better land, where they should meet in a brief season to part no more. These, the most painful of his duties concluded, De Clermont proceeded to others of a less trying nature. He executed a paper to the intent, that one half of his ample fortune should be placed at the disposal of his Royal master, to be ready for any case of emergency that might present itself. This document, as well as another, in which he ventured to suggest the expediency of placing the sum thus bequeathed, in whatever place of security might appear most safe and fitting, was strictly private; and De Clermont determined to entrust it to his friend De Raunaye, to be, if possible, conveyed by him into the King's own hand.

The remaining half of his property he bequeathed to Adèle de St. Croix, encumbered only with pensions to those who were dependant on his bounty. The bequest to Mademoiselle de St. Croix was left wholly at her own disposal, and free from the control of any person with whom she might hereafter choose to unite herself.

Having sealed his packet, De Clermont proceeded with it to the house of his friend De Raunaye, who

undertook the painful mission of delivering it on the morrow, should unfortunate circumstances oblige him to do so. The friends remained together till past six o'clock, when De Clermont returned home to spend a brief space in the solitude of his own mansion, from whence it was agreed they should proceed together to the place of meeting.

CHAPTER XX.

“ Oh vain distinction of exalted state !

No rank ascends above the reach of care,
Nor dignity can shield a queen from woe ;
Despotic nature's stronger sceptre rules,
And pain and passion in her sight prevail.”

Earl of Essex.

WHEN de Clermont reached his Hotel in the Rue St. Honoré, he was informed that a stranger, who had refused to leave either his name or business, had been enquiring for him several times during his absence, and had left the house only a few minutes previously, with the intimation, that he would return within an hour. Conjecturing that his visitor was simply one of the tribe of persons who almost daily beset his door with applications for pecuniary assistance, for De Clermont was known to be not only wealthy, but also ever ready to share his prosperity with those who needed it ; he gave orders that on his return the stranger should be still denied access to him, on the plea of business too urgent to admit of

interruption. Passing through the court-yard, he ascended into his chamber to spend, in solitary meditation, the short time that must elapse ere the arrival of his friend. But the mental retrospection which was carrying him back into far other scenes than that in which he was about to bear a part, was not permitted to be of long duration. It was interrupted by the uncalled for entrance of the faithful old Le Clerc, who still retained in the household of his young master, the post, whose duties, since the infancy of the present Count, he had been accustomed to discharge about the person of his father. Perceiving that De Clermont's thoughts were pre-occupied, the valet stood for a moment holding the half-closed door in a hesitating manner, which seemed to crave forgiveness for the intrusion.

"I wish to be alone, Le Clerc," said his master, kindly.

"Pardon, Monsieur le Comte," answered the old servitor, "but the stranger gentleman has returned with so urgent a request to be admitted, that I have ventured to disobey your commands."

"You have done wrong, Le Clerc," said the Count; then fearful that he had spoken somewhat harshly to the good old man, he added, "but your intentions are always of the best. Tell the stranger that it is impossible I can see him to-night. To-morrow, if he can come again, I shall hope to be more fortunate."

Le Clerc closed the door, and De Clermont was once more left to the hoped-for indulgence of

solitude. Again, however, he was disturbed by the return of his valet, bearing a sealed paper, which he silently laid before his master. De Clermont opened it. It contained only a printed card."

"Is he gone?" enquired the Count, somewhat anxiously.

"No, Monsieur, he still waits below."

"Admit him instantly;" and while the attendant hastened to obey the command, De Clermont was employed in framing various conjectures as to the purport of the expected visit. The card bore the name of one of the King's *valets de chambre*, in whom De Clermont knew his Royal master placed the most implicit confidence. It was plain, then, that his visitor was from the Palace; and from the secrecy which seemed necessary to the delivery of the message with which he was charged, it was also evident that its import was of no common nature. Short space was allowed for his surmises; for a few minutes only had elapsed, when the Royal messenger entered the apartment.

"I regret the necessity which has obliged me to be so importunate, Monsieur de Clermont," he said, when the door had closed and they were alone; "but my mission admitted of no delay. I am instructed by her Majesty to desire your presence at the Palace this evening, at eight o'clock; and it is now, I believe, past seven."

"This evening, at eight? Impossible!" exclaimed De Clermont, in a momentary forgetfulness of all

but his unfortunate engagement. His companion started at the vehemence of the young man's expression, but attributing his refusal to a motive very different from the real, he imagined it arose from De Clermont's apprehension of the danger the Queen would incur in receiving him, for the arbitrary *surveillance* which, at this period, was exercised over the Royal captives, who were virtually prisoners in their own Palace, rendered their communication with any faithful subject from without the walls, at all times difficult, and generally dangerous.

"It would be impossible—at least, on any other evening, without the certainty of your being observed," said the messenger; "but the guard who is stationed in the corridor to-night, has on some former occasions evinced so much more humanity than any of his comrades, that the Queen has determined to trust him, rather than wait for a more fitting opportunity, which, alas! may never arrive."

De Clermont felt the full embarrassment of his situation. He was aware that the Queen's request could only be considered in the light of a command; but a still stronger claim to his respectful obedience, presented itself in the very helplessness of her position, which not only exposed her daily to the most galling indignities, but also denied her the power of marking her displeasure at them.

Permitting his visitor to retain his misconception of his own momentary hesitation to accompany him, he at the same time determined, therefore, to entrust

to De Raunaye the postponement of his meeting with D'Orville, leaving it to his judgement to arrange the affair in the manner least likely to excite suspicion; for it was of the utmost importance that the Jacobin should not become acquainted with the secret of his visit to the Palace. Unwilling to entrust so important an occurrence to writing, De Clermont was necessarily obliged to await the arrival of his friend, while the Queen's messenger returned to the Tuileries, to be on the watch to conduct him, by the private staircase, to the Royal apartments. A few minutes after his departure, De Raunaye made his appearance.

"My friend," said De Clermont, as he entered, "I must again trust to your management, to extricate me from an embarrassment, of which I have only been made aware within the last half hour. The Queen has sent to desire I will be with her Majesty at eight this evening. You know the impossibility of refusal, and must, therefore, contrive to postpone this rencontre of ours. Monsieur D'Orville may name his own hour, and he shall find me ready, only for Heaven's sake, avoid, if possible, the slightest hint that could lead him to suspect by whom I have been detained from keeping my appointment."

De Raunaye paced the room for some minutes without speaking. "The time is short now De Clermont," said he; "What excuse can I possibly assign for you?"

"Any thing that will lead them from the right

scent," said De Clermont anxiously. "You know how eagerly the blood-hounds would strive to magnify this private interview into some Austrian plot against the State; and, Heaven knows, the Queen has troubles enough already, without the additional persecution which such a discovery would entail upon her."

"Her Majesty's commands have come at a awkward moment," said De Raunaye, "still I see, with you, the impossibility of refusing to obey them. I could have wished your meeting had taken place first, since take place it must; for I foresee, how almost impossible it will be to deceive these demagogues. As far, however, as my best endeavours can avail, De Clermont, they are yours," he continued. "I shall come back here from the Bois de Boulogne, and await your return from the Tuileries."

"Thanks; a thousand thanks;" said De Clermont, grasping his friend's hand; and De Raunaye departed on his disagreeable mission, while De Clermont turned his steps towards the small postern gate by which it had been agreed he was to gain admittance into the Palace. He reached it unobserved, followed his conductor in silence along the Terrace of the Feuillans; and ascending a private stair, passed unquestioned along the corridor which led to the Queen's apartments.

"You will remain here;" said his guide, as he ushered him into a small room belonging to one of the Queen's waiting women; and De Clermont was

left alone to reflect upon the novel situation in which he had so unexpectedly been placed. In a few minutes the door opened, and Marie Antoinette, accompanied by the King and Madame Elizabeth, and followed by a single attendant, entered the apartment. How changed was the expression of that beautiful countenance from hers : on whom De Clermont had gazed scarce two years before ; then blooming in all the perfection of womanly loveliness. The symmetry of feature, indeed, remained ; the benevolence of mind still made itself felt ; but the withering hand of care had robbed the eye of its brightness, and the cheek of its bloom ; and the light step, and the joyous expression, were gone for ever ! The Queen and Madame Elizabeth seated themselves together on a small couch, while the King remained standing, with his back to the fire, opposite to the young royalist, who stood near the door by which they had entered, awaiting his Sovereign's commands in an attitude of respectful attention. Never, perhaps, had De Clermont felt more desirous of paying to them his full tribute of homage, nor more ardently anxious to evince his loyalty, then at that moment, when he knew how powerless they were to command either. There was an embarrassing momentary pause, for the Queen probably hoped, and expected, that Louis would be the first to speak ; but he remained silent.

“ We have long sought an opportunity of expressing to you our full sense of your services,

Monsieur de Clermont," said she, at last. "But, alas! we are not only denied the power of rewarding our faithful servants,—we are even forbidden to see them. The time, we trust, may come, when we can find some other mode of evincing our gratitude than in mere empty words; but, till that time arrives, we would not have you ignorant how high a value we place upon your disinterested devotion."

"If, madam," said De Clermont, his cheek flushed with the gratified consciousness of merit; "If I have been so happy as to win the approbation of your Majesty, I am more than rewarded for the poor service you are pleased so greatly to overvalue."

"Nay, Monsieur De Clermont," said Madame Elizabeth; "your modesty causes you to forget that we are indebted to you for the preservation of life itself."

"Procured for us, too," added the Queen, "only at the imminent peril of your own, and with the certainty of incurring the ill-will of every evil minded and disloyal person. We have heard, with regret, that such has been the only return accorded to your gallant conduct of the fatal 6th of October?"

"Forgive me, madam," said De Clermont, "for repeating, that the only value I can attach to the poor service I was so fortunate as to render, consists in its having won for me the approval that your Majesty has been graciously pleased to bestow. If," he continued, his fine countenance beaming with animation, "I might dare to crave a further recom-

CHAPTER XXI.

"The Roman Lucretia committed an offence against purity, lest that purity should be questioned; and the duellist, to avoid the character of a coward, which only the worthless would confer, pursues the very conduct of one, by neglecting to withstand a prejudice so disgraceful to the age in which we live."

Hamilton on Duelling.

WHETHER De Clermont had acted wisely or otherwise, in the hasty decision he had just made, is a point which we must leave to abler heads than our own to determine. We profess to detail facts as they actually happened, without pausing to decide between right and wrong; though in the present instance, we are fain to believe that most of our readers will give him full credit for the purity of the motives by which he was actuated. His determination had been taken during the excitement called forth by the various contending feelings with which he had been agitated during his brief, but interesting audience. These had prompted him to a chivalrous disregard for self, which obliterated every consideration save that which

attached itself to the interest and welfare of his beautiful and defenceless Queen. Whether more mature deliberation would have confirmed him in the prudence of the part he had chosen, will be seen hereafter ; at the present moment, he was allowed no time for reflection, even had the high-wrought state of his feelings permitted it ; for before the excitement of the moment had passed away, the same messenger who had summoned him to the Queen's presence again appeared, and De Clermont's attention became all-absorbed in listening to the instructions he was empowered to impart.

It is now well known, though the circumstance was then kept a profound secret, that at the period in question, the Queen, on several occasions, contrived to elude the vigilance of her persecutors, and through the agency of a few faithful subjects, to communicate with her distant friends in Austria and other countries. Whether from this precarious correspondence which could be carried on only with imminent risk to herself, as well as to the agents who were employed in it, she could derive any hope of succour, is uncertain. But it must, at least, have afforded her a passing consolation, to be able to write freely of the sorrows with which those by whom she was surrounded, were so little disposed to sympathize.

It was, then, on one of these missions that De Clermont was about to be employed. His destination was Vienna ; but as the utmost caution was requisite to avoid the suspicion of any correspondence with the

Austrian court, he was directed, instead of pursuing the usual route to Austria, to proceed first to England, and thence to cross over into Germany. The letters with which he was entrusted were addressed, some of them to the Emperor of Austria, and some to the King's brothers, who were then at Coblenz. They were all written in cypher, so that should De Clermont have the ill-fortune to be arrested, and his papers to be seized, their contents could not compromise either the writer or the bearer of them. The packet which contained these valuable documents was accompanied by the present of a ring of considerable price. It was given not only as a mark of the Queen's especial favour, but was to serve her young preserver as a token of admission to the confidence of those to whom he was sent.

Impressed with a deep sense of the importance of the charge entrusted to him, De Clermont concealed the papers in his bosom, and drawing his cloak around him, silently followed his guide along the corridor. Again they traversed it unquestioned, and in safety reached the terrace by which they had entered the Palace; and in less than ten minutes De Clermont found himself once more passing beneath the gateway of his own hotel. De Raunaye had not yet returned. His protracted absence gave De Clermont full leisure to ruminate on the singular changes wrought within the last half-hour, and the cool night breeze had sufficiently quieted the exhilaration of his spirits to enable him to do so with calmness. It was

not without considerable uneasiness that he now reflected upon the consequences of the decision he had so precipitately taken. He had sent a challenge to D'Orville—it had been accepted—time and place had been fixed—the meeting had been postponed at his own particular desire; and should he now find himself again positively precluded from fulfilling the subsequent engagement which his own request had entailed upon him, in what a situation would he be placed; what construction could possibly be put upon a course so extraordinary; and what possible plea could he produce in justification of such conduct?

Oh! weakness of human nature! which even in the best and noblest of our species shrinks beneath the censure of man, yet fears not to brave the condemnation of a higher power! De Clermont was as free from the faults and foibles of humanity as the imperfections of our nature will allow. Yet the reluctance with which he had found himself obliged to resort to the last extremity with D'Orville, sprang rather from the regret that every generous mind must experience on a similar occasion, than from feelings of a higher character; and the anxiety with which he was now tortured, arose wholly from his apprehension of the probable misconstruction which even his best friends might be disposed to attach to his proceedings. Let those, however, who are inclined to censure the sentiments of the young royalist, remember the country and the period to which he

belonged. The French, even at the era when vice and crime had gained the most powerful ascendancy over them, were still a brave and chivalrous people. Military glory was their idol; the qualities that belonged to it, were among those to which they attached the highest importance; and De Clermont had been educated in the belief, that the code of honour by which they professed to be governed, forbade any gentleman, who desired to merit the epithet of a "Chevalier sans peur et sans reproche," to pass over even the smallest insult without demanding the fullest reparation which the case might be supposed to require. It is, then, not very surprising, that he should have imbibed the universal prejudice of the period, and have experienced the sensitiveness which an apparent disregard to it would naturally excite, when we remember that in these our later days, when the march of intellect, and the progress of civilization, have advanced through nearly half a century, the custom of duelling, so repugnant to every feeling of reason, humanity, and religion, should still continue to be not only sanctioned, but enjoined. Will this scourge of society, this bane of domestic happiness, never be abolished? Are we then living in an age so barbarous, that we are to be preserved from insult and oppression, only by the dread of a penalty like this—a penalty, the disastrous consequences of which are of every day occurrence, and which has been pronounced by many of our best and wisest men, to be "more honoured in the breach

than the observance." Truly, the "laws of honour," are human laws—truly, *they* need reform, since one of the fundamental principles they inculcate, is the necessity of a man's proving himself a moral coward, in order to convince the world that he is not a physical one !

It was, as we have before observed, not very surprising that De Clermont should have felt some little uneasiness as to the result of his quarrel with D'Orville ; but the more he reflected on the nature of the Queen's trust, the more reason he found to be satisfied with his own immediate acceptance of the offer. His royal mistress had selected him from among the few able and zealous partizans who remained to her, for a mission in which both her interest and welfare were intimately concerned. Was it for him, then, at such a moment, when the storm was daily gathering more thickly round the political horizon, to shrink from the duty required of him ? Was it for him, who had sworn to his dying father to sacrifice his best interests, his dearest affections, where the good of his King or country required it, to admit the influence of any selfish consideration ? Assuredly not. Secure in the conscious rectitude of his own intentions, De Clermont sought no other reward ; and in the hope that the time was not far distant when he should be able fully to clear himself from every injurious imputation, he cheerfully determined to brave whatever censure the malice of his enemies might choose to invent, in case his friend

should not prove so fortunate as to arrange the affair, so as to set all his fears on the subject at rest.

It was in this frame of mind that De Raunaye found him on his return from the Bois de Boulogne. It will be believed, that his task there had been neither easy nor agreeable; for D'Orville's rage and disappointment at the frustration of his murderous intentions were commensurate with the hope and exultation with which he had anticipated their success. Duval, however, was too wary to admit the failure of a scheme which had been arranged with so much care. He affected to listen to the arguments De Raunaye employed in behalf of his friend. He abstained from hinting at the suspicions which had naturally been awakened, (for what short of a royal command could have caused De Clermont's absence at such a moment,) and finally, he accepted the proposal for a postponement of the meeting. It was arranged that it should take place the following morning at day-break. Duval, for his own reasons, made choice of the twilight hour of dawn, and De Raunaye gladly yielded, in the blind belief that he was thus procuring for his friend an advantage which the broad day-light could not have afforded. The preliminaries thus arranged, De Raunaye hastened towards the Hotel Clermont, where the Count was awaiting his return; while D'Orville proceeded to give to the Marsellois, the further instructions which had become necessary to the completion of his fiendish design.

Some may be inclined to believe, that under the

circumstances in which he was placed, De Clermont was not justifiable in risking a life which was devoted to the service of the Queen. Such an hypothesis, for a moment, suggested itself to his own mind, but he instantly discarded it, in the conviction that by declining the rencontre with D'Orville, he should incur a still heavier responsibility for the Royal cause, by drawing the public attention and scrutiny to the very quarter where it was least to be desired. The Queen's packet he gave into the keeping of De Raunaye, who undertook either to be the bearer of it, or to deliver it into her Majesty's hands, should unfortunate circumstances preclude the possibility of De Clermont's fulfilling, in person, the charge with which he had been entrusted.

CHAPTER XXII.

“ Here we stand—

Woundless, and well may Heaven's high name be bless'd for't !
As erst, ere treason couch'd a lance against us.”

Decker.

It was still dark, when, towards day-break on the following morning, the two friends issued forth from beneath the Porte Cochère of the Hotel Clermont on their way to the Bois de Boulogne. They passed the Palace of the Tuileries, and in silence traversed the now-deserted Champs Elysées. The day was just beginning to dawn when they reached their place of destination, where they found D'Orville and Duval already arrived. Each of the seconds, for his own particular reasons, was desirous of seizing the few remaining moments of twilight, and of concluding the affair as speedily as possible. The ground selected was a small level space, screened from observation by the surrounding trees, and presenting no apparent advantage to either party. The side on which D'Orville and his second had, as if

accidentally, placed themselves, faced a thicket, immediately in advance of which De Clermont was to take his stand.

“One pace further, Monsieur le Comte;” said his second.

As he spoke, there was a slight rustling of the leaves in the thicket behind them. De Raunaye turned; but all was still again; and as the noise was not repeated, no further notice was taken of the interruption.

The principals were now placed; the seconds retired; and as the momentary sound of their retreating footsteps echoed on the gravel, the Marsellois, who had effectually concealed himself in the thicket immediately in front of which De Clermont was placed, raised his musket to his shoulder, deliberately pointed it with the unerring precision for which his aim was remarkable, and coolly awaited the signal to fire. During the momentary pause which ensued, his hand rested lightly on the trigger, while his keen glance was intently fixed upon his unsuspecting victim. The word was given; the young men simultaneously raised their pistols, and discharged them at the same moment. De Clermont's ball whizzed past his adversary. That of D'Orville was levelled with a truer aim; but whether it was that the imperfect light deceived him, or whether he relied too surely on the musket of the Marsellois for fulfilling the work of death, the shot of the Jacobin carried away, indeed, the button on the left breast of De Clermont's

coat, but for the first time failed in performing its murderous office; and as each of the two combatants respectively lowered his deadly weapon from its up-raised position, both stood equally erect, fearless, and unscathed as before.

D'Orville's countenance was convulsed with passion, as his second advanced towards him. "The villain has played me false," he exclaimed, half choaked with rage.

"Hush, hush," exclaimed Duval, in an under tone; "there has been some mistake; he may demand a second fire. We have still another chance."

"Monsieur de Clermont expresses himself satisfied," said de Raunaye; who, after conferring a moment with his friend, now advanced.

"Then," exclaimed D'Orville, in ungovernable passion, and totally regardless of the laws which bound him to silence, "Monsieur de Clermont has proved himself,—"

"Monsieur de Clermont has proved himself a man of honour and a gentleman," said De Raunaye, hastily interrupting the conclusion of the sentence.

De Clermont advanced, and was about to speak.

"Allow me a moment," said Duval, in some perturbation; and dragging D'Orville aside, he conferred with him for some minutes in private. "Are you mad," he said, "to give them this advantage over you. The affair *must* be at an end."

But D'Orville's rage and disappointment had so completely mastered every feeling of prudence or

propriety, that it was only with extreme difficulty he could be prevailed on to admit the equal impolicy and inutility of giving way to his fury, as well as the blame which must necessarily attach itself to his conduct. Fortunately for all parties, Duval's consummate skill and coolness at length prevailed over the fiery passion of the young Jacobin, so far as to induce him to say a few words in mitigation of those he had so hastily uttered. They were immediately received by De Raunaye on the part of his friend, and the two young men having exchanged a cold salutation, the parties separated.

The reader will be curious to know to what fortunate circumstance De Clermont owed his preservation from the murderous aim of the assassin who had been hired to destroy him.

The Marsellois was no other than the very Martin Berthe, whose mother De Clermont had saved from destruction, and who only became acquainted with the person of his intended victim at the very moment when he was about to fire the fatal shot. In what manner Martin contrived to justify his disobedience to his employer, is of no importance to the thread of our narrative to trace. Circumstances rendered it too dangerous for D'Orville to insist very strenuously on any other apology than that which he might choose to offer. We may, however, be tolerably certain that Martin avoided all reference to the obligations which bound him to De Clermont, since the simple fact of his holding friendly communication

with the royalist leader, would have for ever lost him the confidence of the opposite faction; and, however much the Marsellois might be gratefully attached to De Clermont individually, he was still as deeply interested as ever in the downfall of the party to which his benefactor belonged, and as fully desirous of retaining the reputation which his address and courage had procured for him.

CHAPTER XXIII.

“ Be not over exquisite
To cast the fashion of uncertain evils :
For grant they be so while they rest unknown,
What need a man forestall his date of grief,
And run to meet what he would most avoid ?”

Milton.

THANKS to thee, gentle reader, whosoever thou art, that hast been pleased thus far to share with me the perils and penalties of this my first literary journey; inasmuch as thou hast valiantly braved the pains of weariness and the penalty of disappointment, with the prospect of no better meed for thy pains, than the small modicum of amusement to be looked for from so poor a scribe as thine humble servant. If thou wilt bear with me yet a little longer, and wilt extend thine indulgence in consideration rather of my will, than of my ability to afford thee recreation, thou must needs consent to accompany me in an aerial voyage, which I am fain to undertake, as well for thine especial edification, as for mine own pleasure,

and to be transported in the chariot of imagination, from the gilded Palace of the Tuileries and the crowded city of Paris, to the beautiful and sequestered little valley of Audenach, there to rest thee, till the fitting moment shall arrive for our return to the bustling scenes we have left behind.

It was, then, on a lovely evening, in the month of September,—the second succeeding that on which the young Count de Clermont had been honoured with the audience we have described a few chapters back,—that the beautiful little valley of Audenach lay buried in the most profound repose. The day had been intensely hot; no breeze stirred the foliage, already mellowed into the richly-varied tints of Autumn. Not a sound was heard, save the humming of the bee, busy at his honied task, or the lay of some feathered songster “warbling his wood-notes wild.” The noon-tide heat passed away; the sun set in golden majesty, and the delicious hour of twilight approached, when his burning rays were to be exchanged for the reviving dews of evening, “to breathe refreshment on a fainting world;” the drooping flowers once more raised their heads, and universal Nature, ere she sank into repose, seemed preparing her vesper hymn of praise and thanksgiving to Him, who is the light and life, and Father of all.

Just as the evening shadows had begun to fall, a figure was seen approaching in the direction which conducted from the town of Boulogne towards the dwelling of the Baron de St. Croix. The stranger

was on foot, and alone ; but a single glance sufficed to note him of gentle, if not noble blood. He was evidently unfamiliar with the scenes around him ; for, as he reached the opening of the little strait which conducted to the valley of Audenach, he paused and looked around, as if in uncertainty as to what path he should pursue. His hesitation was but momentary, for at the same instant the young man's attention was arrested by the sound of a guitar ; a few chords were struck, and then the instrument was accompanied by the sweet clear tones of a female voice. The strain was sad and touching, yet it seemed to recall some pleasing recollection to the listener ; for the anxious, thoughtful tone which had before pervaded his fine features, was exchanged for a brighter expression, and he turned quickly towards the little valley whence the sounds proceeded. In a few minutes his noiseless steps on the green turf brought him unperceived within a few paces of the musician. She was seated with her back towards him, on a low green bank, the straw hat which she had cast aside lying on the ground beside her, and leaving her luxuriant dark brown tresses unconfined. She had ended her song as he approached, but her fingers still wandered lightly over the strings, as though some pleasant or cherished remembrance accompanied their tone.

" Adèle," said a voice behind her, which made the songstress start from her seat.

" Alphonse ; dear Alphonse ;" burst from her lips,

as, turning quickly round, a flush of mingled delight and surprize animated her beautiful countenance. In another moment, the young man had sprung forward and clasped her to his breast. There was a minute's pause; for the happiness of meeting was too exquisite for utterance. Adèle was the first to break silence.

"When did you arrive, dear Alphonse?" she said; "and how did you contrive, without a guide, to penetrate into this favourite retreat of mine?"

"I reached Boulogne but an hour since, and *there* was my guide, Adèle;" said her lover, pointing to the guitar—"I could scarce have found one so welcome."

"Nay;" she said; "had I known you were so near, I would have chosen a livelier greeting. But come, you must have so much to tell me about Paris, and dear Madame de Beaumont, and of all I used to love so well;" and as Adèle ran on with her enquiries, De Clermont gazed with delight and admiration on her lovely features, now lighted up with a happiness unknown to them for weeks before. There were many to ask for, and much to hear; for there was an endearing gentleness, a winning fascination in Adèle's manner, that had won for her the good-will of all, and none of those from whom she had ever received a kindness were forgotten. Besides these, there was a list of pensioners who had been dependant on her bounty, and whom she had entrusted to the charge of Madame de Beaumont, on her leaving Paris. De Clermont answered satisfactorily all the

queries of his fair questioner. In truth, he could have listened to her for ever.

"Then your new friends here have not yet caused you to forget those you left behind," said he, at last; as seating himself beside her, he clasped her small white hand within his own.

"Forget them, Alphonse? oh, no!" she exclaimed, the joyous expression fading from her cheek. "What could I find at Audenach to banish so dear a remembrance?"

De Clermont may be excused for the pleasurable sensation with which he listened to her words. "And you still hold sacred the engagement under which we parted?" continued her lover, in a somewhat anxious tone, as he remembered D'Orville's assertion of his betrothment to his cousin.

"Still, and for ever, most sacred," answered Adèle; a bright blush mantling in her cheek. "Unless," she added, timidly, "our separation has brought a change in your own wishes."

It needed not all De Clermont's overflowing expressions of his sentiments to convince the fair girl who sat beside him of his unalterable and devoted attachment. But while he dwelt so fondly on his love, and on the prospect of happiness which lay before him, he abstained from all allusion to the apprehensions which D'Orville's assertion had awakened. We are ever prone to disbelieve that which is displeasing to us; and, as in the present instance, De Clermont had arrived at the conclusion

that the Jacobin had deceived him for some purpose of his own, he consequently thought it needless to awaken Adèle's anxiety upon a subject which he deemed of small importance.

The heiress of Audenach, on the other hand, with sensitive delicacy, abstained from all enquiry as to De Clermont's present plans; for she remembered his words, that at this, their next meeting, he should claim her as his own; and she imagined that it was with such intentions his journey from Paris had been undertaken. She heard, therefore, with some surprise, his request that their meeting, for reasons which he was unable to impart to her, should remain a secret; and was still more astonished when he informed her that his stay at Boulogne could only be protracted so long as the present unfavourable wind precluded the possibility of his departure. Remember, reader, that at that period, the steam-boat of modern days was unknown—remember, too, if thou dost feel inclined to censure Alphonse for entrusting his secret to a young and inexperienced girl, that he who had known so long and so intimately all the admirable qualities of her mind, was best able to judge whether she was worthy of the confidence he reposed in her. Adèle willingly gave the promise required; for, little versed as she was in state affairs, she yet readily conjectured that with them, in the present instance, De Clermont's desire of secrecy was in some measure connected.

“ I am unable even to see your father, Adèle,

now," said De Clermont, as he perceived that the twilight was fast deepening into night, and that his departure could not be much longer delayed; "but at my return, which cannot, I trust, be far distant, think you, then, that he will sanction our union?"

"I believe; at least, I hope," said Adèle, "that my father will approve; but I have never yet found courage to tell him of our engagement. I know not why it is, Alphonse," she continued; "but of late a strange foreboding has oppressed me, that our future lot may prove less happy than the past. Formerly, the prospect was all bright and hopeful, now—"

"You must persuade your father to bring you to Paris: you must revisit your old friends there," said De Clermont; who naturally attributed her dejection to the change from Madame de Beaumont's cheerful abode, with the attractions it possessed, to her present unsocial and secluded home.

"I doubt whether even such a change could alter my present feelings," said Adèle. "I know how absurd is the foundation on which they are grounded. I feel that my fears may be no more than a chimera, and yet—"

"Nay; let me hear, that I may, if possible, dispel them, then," said De Clermont; D'Orville and his machinations starting at once to his remembrance.

Adèle related her singular interview with Marie de Théricourt. "Ever since," she continued, "I have endeavoured to banish that strange woman from my memory; but still her words, which spoke

despise not the warning that wisdom hath vouchsafed thee. I tell thee, danger lurks. I tell thee, that the vulture stoops to rob thee of the dove that even now seeks shelter on thy bosom. Would'st thou, then, leave her a defenceless prey to the destroyer? Dost thou speak of separation at a time like this?"

De Clermont still supported the sinking frame of Adèle, as he stood in silent amazement at the sudden and singular appearance of the sybil. From what source her information was derived, he was unable to divine. The conviction, however, forced itself upon his mind, that his suspicions of D'Orville's nefarious designs were but too well founded; and with it came the latent hope that Marie might in some manner be able to assist him in counteracting them.

"By what means you have gained knowledge of this threatened danger, I know not," he said; "but if, as your words would seem to imply, you are willing to befriend us, it were well to say from whence the danger springs, that I may, if possible, endeavour to anticipate it."

"Would'st thou, then, pause to count the eddying whirls of the pool that must engulf thee? Would'st thou linger to seek the trackless path of the hurricane, when each moment of delay but exposes thee more surely to its fury? What matters it to trace from whence the danger springs, since thou hast the

all-sufficient knowledge, that in flight alone consists the maiden's freedom from destruction?"

"Surely, her father—" hesitated De Clermont.

"Her father!" interrupted Marie, in a tone of the most bitter scorn. "Young man, thou knowest him not. I tell thee, thou must bear the maiden away with thee to England, if thou would'st preserve her from the evil chances of a fate thou dream'st not of."

Fierce was the struggle in De Clermont's breast as he listened to the words of the fortune-teller. The peculiarly painful situation in which Adèle would be placed, and the little of protection which her father's roof afforded, in a moment flashed across his mind. As she still clung, pale and trembling, to him for support, her very helplessness seemed a silent appeal to his protection, which endeared her but the more, and which found but too ready an echo in his own bosom. Must he, then, leave that fair and fragile flower alone and defenceless, exposed to the machinations of a villain such as D'Orville? There was distraction in the very thought. Yet, circumstanced as he was, the sworn and trusted messenger of his Sovereign, where was the possibility of his following the bold counsel of the sybil, even had Adèle herself consented to so rash a step?

"My God!" he mentally ejaculated, "direct and strengthen me through this fearful struggle."

The prayer was heard. His father's words rose

full upon his memory :—" In relinquishing thy best interests, thy dearest affections, for the good of thy King and country, thou wilt offer the most acceptable sacrifice to Heaven."

" My father, thou shalt be obeyed !" he murmured internally. Then, by a strong effort, mastering his emotion, he turned to Marie, whose tall form was dimly visible amid the surrounding darkness. " You propose that which is impossible," said he to the fortune-teller, in a firm voice. " Adèle," he continued, addressing himself to the maiden, " look up, and hearken to me." She raised her head from his shoulder. " Were I to listen to the pleadings of my affection, and to stay near thee at this moment, I could do so only at the expense of duty and of honour, and I should become unworthy of the treasure for which so fearful a sacrifice had been made. Heaven knows how bitter is the pang this struggle costs me!—how willingly I would, for thy dear sake, resign every selfish consideration; but, Adèle, it may not be. For a brief season, we must part—but only for a brief season, love. 'Till our next hoped-for, happier meeting, then, may Heaven watch over and protect thee !"

" Hold !" said Marie, laying her hand upon De Clermont's arm, as she perceived that he was about to tear himself away. " Since needs must be ye part, is there no bond save that of simple words to bind ye to each other?—No vow, which, registered in Heaven, shall be a staff unto the maiden's

resolution, when persuasions, threats, commands, shall all assail her woman's fears?"

"I require none," said De Clermont. "None," he added, after an instant's pause, "beyond that which Adèle is disposed to grant."

"It shall be yours, then, unasked, Alphonse," said Adèle; and, with a trembling voice, she uttered the solemn vow which forbade all earthly ties, save those which should unite her fate with that of Alphonse de Clermont.

The receding form of the fortune-teller was already lost amid the dark foliage, when Adèle had ceased to speak. She still leaned for support on the arm of De Clermont, as, lingering, they at last reached the little garden gate which gave entrance to the valley. A few more minutes of brief, but intense agony,—and the last farewell was given. De Clermont was pursuing his sad and solitary walk towards Boulogne, and Adèle had hastened to relieve the fullness of her oppressed heart in the solitude of her chamber.

CHAPTER XXIV.

“ Oh, happiness ! when art thou to be found !
I see thou dwellest not with birth and beauty,
Tho’ graced with grandeur, and in wealth array’d,
Nor dost thou, it would seem, with virtue dwell,
Else had this gentle lady miss’d thee not.”

Douglas.

AND where was the Baron de St. Croix during the time that one to whom he would have given so cold a welcome had ventured into his domain. When Adèle re-entered the house, her father was still, and for some hours afterwards absent on his now nightly attendance at the revolutionary club of Boulogne. Desirous as he was of winning the popularity which was to ensure his success in the approaching election, De St. Croix, in his harangues, exerted all his eloquence, in order to impress his hearers with a favourable opinion of his worthiness to become their representative. It matters not to trace the various crooked paths through which the Baron laboured to obtain the fulfilment of his wishes, since elections

were then, as elections are now, frequently as corrupt and unpleasing in the progress, as they were unsatisfactory and unprofitable in the result. He was too deeply interested in securing the object he had in view to be either very scrupulous in his choice of means, or inactive in employing them. Every hour was devoted to the all-absorbing business of the moment; and while De St. Croix rejoiced with cold-blooded satisfaction in the powerful aid his contract with D'Orville had procured for him, the innocent victim of his heartless selfishness was left in unheeded ignorance of the sacrifice about to be demanded of her.

With what feelings Adèle dwelt upon the circumstances of her late interview with her lover, and with what anxiety she arose from her sleepless pillow at the morrow's earliest dawn, to watch the veering wind which was to bear him to England, will readily be imagined. Her chamber window looked forth upon the little valley in which, but the evening before, they had met—and parted. It now lay in the calm, beautiful repose of early morning; its stillness all unbroken, save by the occasional matin song of its feathered inhabitants. As Adèle sat by the open casement, her cheek resting on her hand, her eyes fixed on the driving clouds, whose course intimated to her that Alphonse must already be on his voyage to England, her tears fell thick and fast. Reader! hast thou ever experienced the agonizing sensation which accompanies the knowledge that each moment

as it flies is bearing one thou lovest farther, and still farther from thee ? When we know that the dreaded journey is over—when the distance is completed—when the long lingering chain of separation is at last stretched to its fullest extent, then, and only then, do we cease to count the daily, hourly links by which it hath been lengthened !

But Adèle could not even hope for the solace such a certainty might have afforded. She was acquainted, neither, with De Clermont's destination ; with the object of his mission ; nor with the time when its completion might possibly admit of his return. Coupled with this mystery, came the remembrance of the strange words of the fortune-teller ; the danger to which she had alluded ; and her own defenceless position.

“And yet,” thought Adèle, as she sat pondering over Marie's warning, and endeavouring to unravel its meaning, “Why should I fear danger beneath the shelter of my father's roof—and did not Alphonse, too, assure me that his return could not be long delayed?” and for a moment she was cheered by a beam from the sunshine which her own unclouded mind had created. Folding a shawl over her loose white morning dress, she passed softly along the corridor, and descended into the garden to breathe the freshness of the morning air. Her steps, almost unconsciously, brought her in a few minutes to the spot which, on the previous evening, had witnessed her parting with Alphonse. Her straw hat still lay on

the ground, where she had left it; but the night dew had shrivelled its strings, and robbed them of their colour. Her guitar still rested against the low green bank which had served herself and her lover for a seat; but its power of utterance was gone—two of its chords were broken! How little does it need to recall the actual presence of sorrow, when its shadow still hovers over us. In a moment, these mute emblems of human instability re-called to Adèle all the gushing remembrances of the past—and the present; and raising them from where they lay, she retraced her steps, and bore them weeping to her chamber.

Day after day passed on without bringing any relief to the dejection which oppressed her. Her books—her guitar—her embroidery—her flowers—each had lost their power to charm. Her unrest still remained; though the unknown danger she had learnt to dread, appeared to have vanished. The Baron still either secluded himself, or was absent from Audenach, and Adèle was left to the uninterrupted and solitary employment of her time and thoughts. More than a week had now elapsed since her meeting with Alphonse. Each day it appeared that the Baron's occupations became more laborious, for his meals were now sometimes carried to him in his library; sometimes he shared his daughter's repast in haste, and almost in silence, and withdrew the moment it was concluded. It was, therefore, with some surprize, that Adèle one evening received a summons to her father's library. An undefined feeling

of fear, which his manner towards her had never been calculated to dispel, made her heart beat, and her footsteps tremble as she prepared to obey. The Baron was standing, as she entered, with an open letter in his hand, already equipped for his nightly expedition to Boulogne.

"I have sent for you, Adèle," he said, "that you may not be wholly unprepared for some arrangements in which it is necessary you should participate, preliminary to an event which will, I trust, insure your welfare through life. I had, myself, scarcely anticipated that it would have taken place so speedily; but this letter informs me that your cousin, Monsieur D'Orville, will reach Boulogne to-night. He will return with me to Audenach; and to-morrow, Adèle, you will prepare yourself to receive him as the future protector my care has selected for you. Too happy am I, in having found one in every way so worthy to be entrusted with the happiness of my daughter. Go now, and seek your pillow, for these pale cheeks promise but an indifferent welcome to our expected guest." So saying, he imprinted a kiss upon her forehead; and without further noticing the agitation his abrupt disclosure had occasioned, or waiting for a reply to it, the Baron unconcernedly re-folded and placed D'Orville's letter in his bosom; then quitted the house, and mounted his horse for Boulogne.

For several minutes after her father's departure, Adèle remained standing motionless on the same spot; and the last echo of his horse's feet had died


away in the distance, ere she recovered from the overwhelming, oppressive stupor, into which his communication had plunged her. She had not yet been able to collect her scattered ideas, when the voice of Félix Noel, who had emerged unseen from a side door, and who now stood near her, made her sensible of his presence.

"I thought you called, Mademoiselle; do you want any thing?" said Félix, in a tone in which curiosity, interest, and anxiety for his beautiful foster-sister were strangely blended.

"Nothing, Félix;" said Adèle, quietly; and turning from him, she mechanically traversed the corridor towards her own chamber.

It was fortunate for Adèle, in her present highly excited state of mind, that the first object on which her eyes rested had power to open the only source which could bring relief to her feelings. Her unstrung guitar lay before her. The remembrances belonging to it unclosed the flood-gates of her sorrow, and casting herself into a chair, she burst into an agony of tears.

But Adèle did not long allow herself to dwell on the simple knowledge of the misfortune which impended over her. With a buoyancy of spirit peculiar to herself, and with true woman's ingenuity she set herself, (when the first ebullition of feeling was over,) to devise some means of averting it. Nay, she even contrived, with the strange contradiction of human nature, to find relief in the exchange from vague



apprehension, to the knowledge of the very impending evil, the completion of which she would the most have dreaded. Her first impulse would have been to confide the secret of her engagement with De Clermont to her father. But then his manner was at all times so stern; the tone in which, without a word of kindness or preparation, he had commanded her obedience, was so imperative, that Adèle's heart trembled at the thought. Should she then await the hoped-for chance of De Clermont's speedy return, and entrust the task to him? Impossible: for her cousin was to reach Audenach that very night; and on the morrow she was expected to receive him in the character of an accepted lover. To delay the *éclaircissement* then, would be neither just to him, nor to herself. It was due to both, that Monsieur D'Orville should be at once undeceived. The relinquishment of her hand could cost *him* nothing. *He* had no affections to sacrifice; and Adèle's ingenuous mind never dreamed that any other consideration could influence him. Judging of her cousin by the only standard of manly virtue with which she had as yet been acquainted, (that of the high-minded and chivalrous De Clermont,) she determined, in full reliance upon his supposed generosity, to unfold to him the pre-engaged state of her affections, and to implore his mediation with her father.

Alas! poor maiden! How sweet and unbroken were the slumbers into which thy confiding innocence lulled thee! Adèle's secret engagement with De

Clermont had hitherto oppressed her with a sense of wrong, which, in an ingenuous mind, always accompanies the knowledge of concealment. She was about, then, to be relieved from the thralldom of secrecy. The unbroken barrier to her happiness was about to be removed. Happy, happy state, when repeated disappointment has not yet robbed the young heart of its freshness! When the wings of hope are not yet so saturated with our tears, but that a single sun-beam will suffice to dry their feathers, that she may plume them for another flight!

CHAPTER XXV.

“Sincerity!

Thou first of virtues, let no mortal leave
Thy onward path! although the earth should gape,
And from the gulf of hell destruction cry
To take dissimulation's winding way.”

Douglas.

WHEN Adèle, on the following morning, descended to the breakfast parlour, the refreshing slumbers of the night had brought back the brightness to her eye, and the colour to her cheek. Perhaps she had never looked more lovely than at the moment when, with a blush and a smile, she accepted the proffered hand of D'Orville, to whom her father had presented her; and while, afterwards, she went through the simple duties of the breakfast table with a native grace, even more winning than beauty itself.

But what availed either the grace or beauty of the Heiress of Audenach, wasted as they were upon those who were both unable and unwilling to appreciate either? D'Orville looked upon his cousin,

only as he would have examined a beautiful trinket, the chief value of which consisted, not in its intrinsic worth, but in the richness of the setting. De St. Croix considered his daughter in no other light than as a passive instrument, placed by a fortunate chance in his hands, to be employed in whatever manner might be most useful for his own purposes. Such were the beings to whom Adèle was called on to give her heart's best affections! Such the relations from whom she hoped to receive the affectionate sympathy which her gentleness and beauty ought to have inspired!

The first morning of D'Orville's arrival was passed by him with the Baron in his library, and Adèle was, therefore, left in undisturbed meditation, to ponder over the words with which she should commence her communication to her cousin. . The evening, as usual, brought with it the necessity for the Baron's ride to Boulogne.

"I leave *you* to entertain your cousin, Adèle," said he, as rising after their evening's meal, he prepared to take his departure. Adèle's heart beat faster, and her colour mounted, as she remembered that the dreaded moment of disclosure was approaching. As for D'Orville, he desired nothing better than the novelty of a few hours passed in the society of his betrothed bride. She was a pretty plaything, he must acknowledge, and as interesting as any plaything of the sort could be; and D'Orville wanted not for words, when need required that he should use a

softer tone than was his usual custom. The evening, then, promised well enough for him—And how for Adèle? *Nous allons voir*—

The two cousins stood on the upper step of the stone flight, at the foot of which the Baron had mounted his horse. When he was quite out of sight, Adèle re-entered the house. The door of her boudoir stood open—

“Will you admit me into the mysteries of this little paradise?” said D’Orville, following her at the same time uninvited into the room.

“Certainly, if you wish it;” said Adèle, sweetly; but the next minute she felt how irksome, with her present restless feelings, would be the necessity for sitting down to a quiet *tête à tête* with her cousin; and how much more desirable would be the open air, and the power of locomotion.

“But would you not prefer my flower garden?” she added; “I have so few things here that could interest you.”

“Where *you* are, all things are equally interesting, *ma belle cousine*,” said D’Orville, gallantly. “But let us to the garden, that I may see how much fairer is its mistress, than any flower it can boast.”

Without noticing the compliment, Adèle folded a shawl round her, and took down from its resting place, the straw hat with its faded ribbons. As she led the way through the various parterres of flowers which were old Toinon’s pride and boast, she contrived in each to find some subject for discourse,

utterance. "It was only last night, Monsieur D'Orville," she said, "that I was informed of your purposed visit to Audenach, and of the views with which it was undertaken. Had I been so earlier, much that is painful to myself, and that cannot but be displeasing both to you and my father, might have been avoided. As it is, I can only entreat you to accept my sincere regret, that under some misconception, my father should have induced you to entertain hopes that never can be realized. It would, indeed, be equally unjust to you, and to myself, to deceive you for one moment, with the prospect of an engagement which can never exist between us."

Had D'Orville's affection been engaged, or could his feelings, indeed, have been wounded in any way, he would not, with such perfect coolness, have listened to his beautiful cousin's gentle but decided rejection of his suit. But woman's words were not likely to move *his* iron nature, neither had those of Adèle awakened any fears on the subject of his desired marriage. He had before suspected her attachment to De Clermont, and had anticipated some small difficulty from it, though he never doubted the result of the affair. A woman's resolution—a woman's constancy to stand in the way of *his* wishes!—Pshaw; the supposition was too absurd.

"You will scarcely deem it unreasonable, Adèle," he said, "if I should seek to know the grounds upon which you have formed so hasty a resolution. Our

acquaintance has been of so short a date, that I can hardly have offended beyond all hope of pardon."

"So far from it," said Adèle, "that I am about to seek a proof of your generosity, which from one less worthy, I had not dared to ask; and in return for which, I can make you only the poor offering of my friendship. Attachment of a warmer nature is no longer mine to bestow."

"Then your affections are pre-engaged?" said D'Orville.

"You have guessed rightly," answered Adèle, blushing as she spoke. "What other cause, indeed, could justify my rejection of one chosen by my father, for qualities which I can but regret my inability to appreciate as they deserve."

D'Orville paused, ere he replied. "Your attachment must be of very recent date, that your father should not yet have been made acquainted with it?" said he, at last, in the hope of drawing from her any information that might be turned to De Clermont's disadvantage.

"Not so," said Adèle; "it has existed from my earliest childhood, and has been strengthened by the daily intercourse of years."

"And is of course mutual?" inquired her cousin, in a slight tone of irony.

"Else, the avowal had never passed my lips," said Adèle, colouring deeply, and the slightest possible tone of offended pride perceptible in her words.

"And if, then, this attachment has existed for

years, and that it is fixed upon an object whom your father cannot disapprove, why has he so long been left in ignorance of it?"

"You ask me a question, which even to myself, I am unable to answer," replied Adèle. "I could have wished it had been otherwise for all our sakes. I could have wished to have avoided the necessity which urges me to ask a sacrifice of your friendship, upon which, I feel, I have so slight a claim."

As his fair companion paused in embarrassment, D'Orville looked enquiringly in her face, as if to seek there an explanation of her meaning.

"If," she proceeded, earnestly clasping her hands, "If I might venture to ask—if I might dare to hope—that you would undertake the office of mediator with my father; that you would consent to break this intelligence to him, and voluntarily to resign the hand which must be valueless, unaccompanied by the affection which is no longer mine to give. Oh! Monsieur D'Orville, if you would relieve me from this dreaded task, how truly, how deeply should I be indebted to you!"

There was a pleading, winning earnestness in Adèle's words and looks; a touching simplicity in the manner in which she had thus cast herself upon the mercy of an almost total stranger, that must have penetrated a less flinty nature than that of her cousin. But D'Orville was not accustomed to lend a favourable ear to aught that militated against his own interest. What mattered it to him whether

Adèle's inclinations were thrown into the scale ! Would not the broad lands of Audenach more than outweigh so trifling a consideration ; and should he pause in his pursuit, merely to gratify the fantasy of a love-sick girl, the object of whose passion, too, was no other than his hated rival, the Count de Clermont ?

But while D'Orville, without a moment's hesitation, adopted in his own mind the course which precluded the possibility of his acceding to his cousin's request, voluntarily to decline to her father all pretension to his daughter's hand, he was quite as little disposed to encounter the tears and entreaties which a knowledge of his purpose might be likely to produce. To avoid the trouble of combating his cousin's arguments, he appeared to acquiesce in her wishes ; but he, at the same time, gave her such counsel as would infallibly secure his own views, while it removed from himself the odium and annoyance that would now rest upon the person to whom he transferred the enforcing of them. He framed his answer to her appeal accordingly.

"How deeply soever I may regret the circumstances which deny me the fulfilment of my best hopes, Adèle," said her cousin, "I would still stifle my feelings, in order to undertake the task you require of me, did not delicacy and propriety alike forbid it. Let me pray you to remember, that I came hither your father's invited and approved guest—your accepted and affianced lover. How

then, can I, in this the first moment of our acquaintance, decline the treasure of his daughter's hand, without offering an insult both to your attractions and to his partiality, which no explanation, on my part, can possibly excuse. No, my fair cousin, the communication must come from yourself. Forgive me for adding, that it ought to have been made long since. Much pain might, indeed, have been thus spared us. But it is not yet too late. Speak to your father. He is too indulgent not to lend himself to your wishes. Obtain his consent to the dissolution of our contract, and I promise to intrude myself no longer on your presence, but to depart instantly, and for ever, from Audenach."

There was something so plausible, so encouraging in D'Orville's words and manner, that Adèle felt both soothed and grateful for them.

"I believe you are right, Monsieur D'Orville," she said; "I ought, indeed, long since to have told my father of our engagement, for concealment always leads to error, and I am now paying the penalty of it. I have been very, very wrong," she added, her eyes filling with tears; "but there is still time to repair my fault, and it is to you my best thanks must be offered, for directing me in what manner to do so." With a sweet smile, she held out her hand to D'Orville as she spoke, in all the warmth of confiding friendship. He pressed it to his lips in respectful silence, and rising, they turned together towards the house.

When Adèle laid her head upon her pillow, her dreams were as light and her slumbers as peaceful as on the preceding night, for the serpent had carefully avoided inflicting a single wound upon his victim that could warn her of her danger. He had rather lulled her into the fatal security which was to conduct only to more certain destruction.

CHAPTER XXVI.

“Thou hast prevaricated with thy friend,
By underhand contrivances undone me ;
And while my open nature trusted in thee,
Thou hast stepped in between me and my hopes,
And ravish'd from me all my soul held dear.
Thou hast betray'd me.”

Lady Jane Grey.

“I BELIEVE, then, our arrangements are completed,” said the Baron to his nephew, as late as on the following day they sat together in his library, by a table strewed over with papers and parchments. “Nothing remaining, but to affix my daughter’s signature to the contract?”

“Nothing, my dear uncle ;” replied D’Orville.

“And you are, I dare say, not unwilling that the affair should be concluded without delay,” added De St. Croix, who was desirous of ridding himself as speedily as possible of the interruption to the more interesting business he had in hand, occasioned

by the necessary preparations for his daughter's marriage.

D'Orville penetrated his motive, and determined to profit by it. By not appearing to urge the matter too strenuously, he should quicken his uncle's desire to do so, and ensure his enforcement of Adèle's obedience.

"My beautiful cousin's attractions will best answer for my impatience to receive so lovely a prize," said he; "but, possibly Adèle herself may not be equally well-inclined for such haste. Were it not better, my dear Sir, previously to consult her on the subject?"

The Baron could have annihilated his future son-in-law for his considerate kindness.

"Oh, by no means," he said; "my daughter will be very glad to be saved the trouble of deciding. Besides, women should never be consulted about any thing but their embroidery frames or spinning wheels."

"I am afraid," said D'Orville, laughing, "that you cannot persuade *them* to think so."

"Well, well;" said the Baron, pettishly; "the contract shall be signed to-morrow, and you can afterwards settle the matter between you. You will, I suppose, find no great difficulty in doing so."

"But you forget, my dear Sir, that Adèle is still unaware that the contract is actually concluded, and awaits only her signature. Allow me to suggest the expediency of your preparing her for the event."

D'Orville spoke as he wished, for it was highly necessary, that the *éclaircissement* should be past, and Adèle's objections overruled previous to the moment of signing.

"Very unnecessary," said the Baron, impatiently ; "but I suppose you must be gratified ;" and he rang the bell as he spoke, to command his daughter's presence.

"In the meanwhile, then," said D'Orville, who, for obvious reasons, was glad of an excuse for absenting himself, "I shall ride to Boulogne to inquire for the packet I have been expecting from Paris ;" and he rose and quitted the room, leaving the Baron, who had risen from his great leathern chair, standing in expectation of his daughter's appearance.

In spite of the hopeful confidence with which Adèle had retired to rest on the preceding night, she awoke in the morning with all her dread and misgivings renewed at the thought of the inevitable interview with her father. The day was passed in alternations of hope and fear, and certainly the latter feeling greatly predominated, as she lingered a moment on the lock of his library door, ere she ventured to obey his summons. When she entered, the impatient expression of his countenance was little calculated to dispel her apprehensions, as re-seating himself he laid his hand upon the still open parchment, while Adèle advanced near to the table on which it was lying.

"After the intimation you have already received,

Adèle, of a certain event about to take place, you will, no doubt, readily divine," said her father, "the subject upon which I wish to speak with you."

She was silent.

"It was almost unnecessary to send for you to-night," he continued; "but I have done so at the considerate suggestion of your cousin, who imagined, that as the arrangements for your marriage were now concluded, you might possibly desire a few hours preparation for the only part in them which you will be called upon to take."

"The arrangements concluded!" exclaimed Adèle, clasping her hands in surprise and agitation.

"Yes, child; and since you think them so very terrible, the sooner the affair is ended the better. This parchment contains the contract for your marriage," he continued, rising, as if the subject required no further comment; "and to-morrow I expect you will be prepared to sign it."

But Adèle was not prepared, either for the suddenness of her father's command, or for the obedience which it enjoined. So little did she expect either the one or the other, that she stood for some minutes unable to speak.

"Go, now, child, to your chamber, and compose yourself," said the Baron; unwilling to be further troubled with the exhibition of any feminine feeling.

His daughter stood with her hands clasped, her eyes fixed upon the fatal paper, for the drawing up of which such unwonted haste had been employed.

"Oh, that I had known this earlier," she exclaimed, in uncontrollable emotion.

"Tut, tut, child;" said the Baron, growing impatient at the agitation of which he misinterpreted the cause; "you must learn to dismiss these silly vapours, and to appreciate the value of the husband I have chosen for you. There—go to your chamber, and busy yourself about your bridal finery; for the time will be short enough for the choosing of your ribbons and laces."

"Alas!" exclaimed Adèle; "that I should have been guilty of so great a fault, as that for which I am now paying the penalty. I deserve your anger. How, then, dare I hope for your forgiveness for concealing an attachment which entails upon me the additional crime of disobedience to your commands. But oh! do not—do not, I beseech you, punish me by requiring me to sign that fatal contract."

"Really, Adèle, I am at a loss to understand these rhapsodies," said the Baron. "Of what attachment can you possibly be dreaming, except of that which, as a matter of course, will be accorded to your future husband?"

"But not to my cousin, Monsieur D'Orville," said Adèle. "To him I can never offer those affections which"—she paused in embarrassment.—"Oh! forgive me," she continued; "that I tell it now for the first time—which—are unalterably given to another."

"And who may the favoured suitor be," said the

Baron, ironically; "who has been so happy as to win this unalterable attachment?"

Neck, brow and cheek were suffused with a crimson blush, as Adèle, in a faint voice, uttered the name of the Count De Clermont.

"Really! and where may the Count De Clermont have found means to bestow on you the honour of his acquaintance?"

"In Paris, at the house of Madame de Beaumont," answered Adèle, faintly.

"Truly, I have selected a most worthy person to be entrusted with the charge of my daughter," said the Baron; "when she could thus wantonly expose her, to the impertinent attentions of every lordling fop, who might choose to seek the favour of the Heiress of Audenach."

"Indeed, indeed, you do them both wrong," said Adèle, earnestly. "Alphonse is Madame de Beaumont's nephew; and, of course, was often at her house, and,—"

"Of course, was made perfectly aware that Mademoiselle de St. Croix was my only daughter," interrupted the Baron. "This is folly, Adèle. Let me have no more of it. I thought you had more sense than to force me to use commands, when the simple notification of my wishes ought to have sufficed. Let me find you then, to-morrow, in a better frame of mind, and prepared cheerfully to submit to them."

"My father," said Adèle, meekly, "I will not be

guilty a second time of the error it has once cost me so much to repair. I will not deceive you with the belief, that to-morrow can effect a change of purpose which I feel is now, and for ever,"

"Silence, Mademoiselle," interrupted the Baron in a voice of thunder. "Let me have no more of your puling objections. I have no time for altercation; neither if I had, could it avail you. Retire to your chamber; and remember that *I will* be obeyed."

Adèle perceived that no further reply would be permitted her, even could she have found courage to frame one. She obeyed her father's commands, and withdrew in silence to her chamber, but not to the peaceful repose which had visited her on the two preceding nights. It was now exchanged for the dreadful alternative of disobedience to her father, or abandonment of Alphonse de Clermont. Each presented a fearful relinquishment of duty; but not an equal sacrifice of the heart's affections.

Alas! the love she bore De Clermont, pleaded but too powerfully against the cold and studied sentiment which filial respect alone demanded for her father. Adèle was too good—too virtuous to listen only to the promptings of her affection, where duty might incline the balance on the other side. She prayed earnestly to be preserved from the temptation that was busy at her heart. She prayed to be directed towards the right path; and for the Divine assistance in pursuing it. Soothed and strengthened

by this act of devotion, she rose from her knees, and seating herself, her eyes shaded with her hand so as to exclude every object whose recollections might have caused her to waver in the resolution she might be called upon to take, she set herself carefully to examine the circumstances in which she was placed.

On one side was the infringement of one of the most sacred duties of life—an act of ingratitude to her father—of disobedience to his commands. On the other, was the solemn vow, with which she had plighted her faith to De Clermont—with which she had sworn before Heaven, that no earthly engagement, save that which bound her fate to his, should ever pass her lips. Could she then, without offence, break the sacred oath that was registered in heaven, by consenting to the union with her cousin? Could she stand by him at the altar, and utter those solemn words which must vow to him her undivided duty and affection, when every thought and feeling was centred in another? Impossible! She could not incur the penalty of such premeditated perjury. Her father could not command so cruel a mockery of one of our holiest institutions? Had he, indeed, the right to do so? Adèle did not trust herself with the discussion. She did not seek to justify her disobedience by other arguments, than simply those which duty pointed out. Upon these she grounded her resolution, and prepared to nerve herself for persevering in it, come what would. Whether Adèle

dwelt with much regret upon the vow which bound her to her lover, we will not pause to inquire; but it would, perhaps, be expecting too much from human nature, to suppose that her heart was not lighter when the decision had been made, which was so consonant with its dictates.

When, late at night, D'Orville returned to Audenach, he instantly perceived that his cousin's communication had been made, and that it had been received exactly in the manner he had hoped and foreseen. The Baron was thoroughly out of humour—thoroughly disinclined for his nephew's society; and evidently, by no means disposed to speak of his daughter.

"This augurs well," thought D'Orville; "but he shall be goaded yet a little further;" and without noticing his uncle's manner, he put on the appearance of the most exuberant, talkative spirits.

"I have left Boulogne, in a most glorious commotion," he said; "the people seem all going mad, because you have not paid them your usual visit this evening."

"They will come to their senses to-morrow;" answered St. Croix, shortly.

"I hope so, my dear uncle; but I suspect you will have some trouble with them yet."

"Pshaw! what have I fear with the President's interest?"

"Very true, provided you make a good use of it; but these precious electors seem to require a wonderful deal of attention."

"What attention have I neglected that they can expect," said St. Croix, nettled at being thus catechised by his nephew.

"Excuse me, I did not mean to say that you had done so. I was only thinking with pleasure, that our business of this morning being concluded, you will now be able to give your undivided attention to other matters."

The Baron appeared uneasy at the turn in the conversation.

"I am glad you suggested to me," said he, "the expediency of speaking to my daughter to-night. She seems a little inclined to make a fool of herself; and has been favouring me with a few of her fears and fancies."

D'Orville looked distressed. "I should be truly sorry, my dear, Sir," said he, "to hasten our marriage beyond my fair cousin's wishes, but,—"

"I anticipate what you would say," interrupted De St. Croix,

"You are as anxious as I am that the affair should be at once concluded, and of course, Adèle cannot object, when she knows that it is my desire it should be so."

"It will be most unfortunate, indeed," said D'Orville, "if we cannot induce Adèle to acquiesce; for I regret to say, I am unexpectedly obliged to return to Paris almost immediately. There is another reason, my dear, Sir, still more important, which urges me to desire that my marriage should not be

long delayed. I find by the letters which have reached me to-night, that a sale of national property is likely to take place, which will extend itself to Boulogne, and it is very probable, that a part, at least, of the lands of Audenach will be included. Now, having just applied to the President for his interference in your behalf, it is impossible I can do so a second time, unless my own personal interest in the estate may seem to afford a sufficient plea for troubling him on the subject. I should hope my lovely cousin will allow these considerations to have their proper weight."

It afforded no small amusement to the artful Jacobin to watch the expression of the Baron's countenance, while he was speaking. The dreaded sale of the national property—the prospect of losing at once, the valuable estate of Audenach, and the equally valuable good will and influence of his nephew, excited fears which very manifestly displayed themselves in spite of his efforts to conceal them. D'Orville could have laughed outright at the contortions of his uncle's countenance beneath its assumed composure.

"If you prefer taking the chance, however,"—he said, maliciously.

"Oh, no! by no means," said the Baron; "of course your wishes and convenience are to be consulted. It would be strange, indeed, to put them in competition with a few girlish caprices.

To-morrow the contract shall be signed, and the marriage can be solemnized as soon after as you please."

"*C'est une affaire finie,*" thought D'Orville, as the worthy relations separated for the night.

CHAPTER XXVII.

“ I am a maid betrothed !
All but the rites, a wife ! a wedded heart ;
Although unwedded hand ! Reflect on that ! ”

The Wife.

It would seem that in the conversation which had just taken place, the Baron and his nephew were equally deceiving and deceived. De St. Croix, unwilling that D'Orville should become acquainted with his daughter's sentiments, and unaware of her disclosure to him, abstained from all reference to it, particularly as he never allowed himself to doubt the certainty of her obedience. D'Orville, on the other hand, fully persuaded from his uncle's silence, that Adèle's objections had been either unheeded or overruled, thought it unnecessary to allude to them, and contented himself with strengthening the Baron's good resolutions, in a manner that afforded no small amusement to himself. Not that his hint of the sale of the national property was an invention. Such a proceeding was, indeed, in contemplation, and actually

did take place, though whether Audenach and its domain were then, or ever, included in the general sweep will be seen hereafter.

When the trio met again the following morning at the breakfast table, D'Orville was the only one of the party who appeared quite happy and unconcerned. The Baron was still moody and taciturn. He was rude and unkind to his daughter; uncourteous to his nephew; angry with himself; and evidently annoyed at the efforts he thought it necessary to make to conceal his ill-humour. Adèle was perfectly calm and collected; but her pale cheeks, and swollen eyelids sufficiently betokened in what manner she had passed the night. She went mechanically through the duties of the breakfast table; but the most indifferent observer might have seen that her composure arose not from a mind at ease, but from the high wrought state of feeling into which she had tutored herself to go through her self-imposed task. She felt grateful to D'Orville for the apparent willingness with which he relieved the awkwardness of their meal. He was all life and animation—all respectful, but unobtrusive attention to his cousin—and all conciliating submission to her father's caprice. She saw in his manner a confirmation of his generous behaviour towards herself, and imagined that his happiness sprung from self-approbation of his own conduct. It offered a most acceptable contrast to the harsh, unrelenting countenance, and demeanour of her father, and one from which Adèle drew the most favourable augury.

D'Orville, on the other hand, could not but notice the change in his cousin's appearance; but he believed that the struggle which had cost her so much was finally decided, and already looked upon Audenach and its fair heiress as his own.

When their meal was ended, Adèle rose as usual to retire.

"We shall require your presence in the library at eleven o'clock, Adèle," said her father, with a peculiar look, which was, however, lost upon his daughter, for her eyes were cast on the ground. He walked to the door, and opening it for her exit, Adèle in still delusive hope and reliance upon her cousin's generosity, without either venturing to look up, or to reply, quitted the room. It was a relief to find herself alone again: to be able to call up in solitude whatever remembrances could strengthen the resolution she so much needed. She placed herself by the open casement, and looking forth upon the little valley, mentally recapitulated the circumstances of her late interview with De Clermont, the strange warning of the fortune-teller, and the binding vow which she had suggested. The time waned, as she sat absorbed in meditation, and Adèle at last turned to look at the *pendule* which decorated her mantle-piece. As she did so, a gentle tap at the door made her heart beat violently.

"*Entrez*," said Adèle, in a faint voice.

It was her foster brother.

"*Lisez, lisez*, Mademoiselle," said Félix, in a low

and hurried tone. "*Et courage !*" and throwing down a dirty slip of paper, and without waiting for a reply, he cautiously re-closed the door, and disappeared. Adèle picked up the scroll. It contained only these few words, written in scarcely legible characters :

"Maiden,—thý vow ! Beware of kith and kin ; for treachery lurks where least ye deem of ! Be resolute, and all may yet be well !"

There was no difficulty in guessing who was the writer. Adèle still stood gazing upon the curious epistle of the fortune-teller, who seemed to take so unaccountable an interest in her fate, when she was aroused by another knock at her chamber door. It was the summons to her father's library. She thrust Marie's note into her bosom, and without allowing herself to pause, she instantly proceeded to obey.

The Baron and his future son-in-law were standing by the opposite window as she entered. A third person, whom she had never before seen, had been added to their number. He was seated at the table, apparently engaged in examining the papers and parchments, with which, as well as with the implements for writing, it was covered. On perceiving Adèle, he rose, while D'Orville advanced towards her, and gallantly offering her his hand, he conducted her to a seat.

In a moment the transaction for which they were thus assembled became evident. The open parchment, which she but too well remembered ; the presence of the stranger, whose occupation sufficiently

betokened for what purpose he was there—but most of all, the harsh, commanding looks of her father—all combined to convince the poor Heiress of Audenach, that she had nothing further to hope from his indulgence.

But Adèle did not allow herself to be overcome with the prospect of the ordeal through which she had to pass. The effort was yet to be made. She had nerved herself to encounter it; and though her cheek was deadly pale, and her hand trembled as, seating herself, she relinquished that of her cousin, she yet succeeded in subduing her emotions into perfect calmness. D'Orville stood beside her, while the Baron advanced to the table at which the notary had replaced himself. The man of law performed an elaborate flourish of the pen, returned his instrument of office to the inkstand, and rising in a self-satisfied and business-like manner, pushed the parchment over to that side of the table, at a little distance from which Adèle was sitting.

“If Mademoiselle will give herself the trouble,” said he, respectfully:—“Here—where the name is written in pencil;” at the same time pointing out with his finger the spot indicated.

Adèle rose; without noticing the words of the notary, she addressed herself to her father. “Am I then, indeed, so wretched,” she said, “as to have deceived myself with the false hope of my father’s pardon and indulgence?”

“Your chance of either must depend upon your-

self, Adèle," said he, employing words of gentleness which his tone and look contradicted. "If *you* are as willing to receive, as *I* am to bestow my favour, you must endeavour by your conduct to deserve it?"

"I should ill deserve my father's favour," said Adèle, "were I to seek it through the medium of deceit and falsehood. Oh! Monsieur D'Orville," said she, addressing her cousin, "will *you* not plead for me? Will *you* not intercede for me with my father, and save me from the crime of disobedience?"

"My fair cousin," said D'Orville, taking her hand with apparent kindness, "I am scarce prepared for the cruel task you would impose upon me. Nay, I have been even led to hope that a few days would have completed my happiness. You will not then, I know, require of me the dreadful alternative of incurring either my worthy uncle's displeasure, or yours, Adèle, in a case, especially where my own feelings are so deeply interested."

In spite of the assumed kindness of her cousin's manner, Adèle perceived that she had no further hope of aid from him, and her heart died within her.

"I had scarcely anticipated, Adèle," said her father, "that you would so entirely have forgotten both your filial respect and feminine modesty. Were you even wanting in a sense of duty, I should have thought that shame would have prevented your exposing your obstinacy and disobedience in a manner as undutiful, as it is indelicate."

"Could I have avoided both," said Adèle, "with-

out committing a still greater sin, Heaven knows how willingly I would have done so. But in obeying your commands,—”

But the Baron was by no means desirous that the lawyer should become a participator in what Adèle was about to say. He was besides uneasy at the restraint, presented by the presence of a stranger, to his own harshness.

“This discussion must be any thing but interesting to you, Sir,” said he, to the notary, who was standing in silent amazement. “Allow me to request you will leave us for a moment;” and the Baron opened the door of an adjoining room.

“I am both surprised and sorry, Adèle,” said he, when the door was closed, “to find that my last night’s admonition has been so ill-attended to. What opinion your cousin can have of your conduct, I leave you to judge; but if you have any regard for mine, you will not oblige me, by your obstinacy, to enforce my commands with harsher words than those I have yet used towards you.”

Adèle raised her eyes for a moment to the countenance of her cousin, but the silent appeal was unanswered. The words of the fortune-teller had been fulfilled. She had trusted to kith and kin, and she had been deceived!

Casting her eyes to the ground, she remained a few moments silent, during which De St. Croix believed that his daughter’s communings were leading her to submission; but it was not so.

"If," she said, at last, in a low, but firm voice, "the offence of which I have been guilty, in concealing my unfortunate attachment, be of so deep a dye as scarcely to admit the hope of pardon, then am I willing to submit to any penalty my father may think fitting to inflict, save that which would bring upon me a still heavier misfortune than even *his* displeasure. Oh! my father," she continued, casting herself at his feet, her hands clasped, and her eyes raised to his in earnest supplication, "let me beseech you to consider what it is you require. Ask not of me, I implore you—"

"Rise, Mademoiselle," interrupted St. Croix, sternly; "the time is past for supplication. Since gentler words will not suffice to call you to your duty, I must command your obedience."

Adèle rose—she was now comparatively calm. The momentary agitation in which she had flung herself at her father's feet to implore his mercy, had passed away.

"My father," she said, "could I have purchased the inestimable treasure of your favour and forgiveness at any sacrifice save that which you require, I had not shrunk beneath the trial. But there is a higher obedience yet, than that demanded for an earthly parent—a still holier duty which forbids me to offer to my cousin, at God's holy altar, the perjured promise of affections which are unalterably devoted to another, and which have been ratified by a solemn vow, pronounced in the face of Heaven. If, then,

there is, indeed, no other price at which I may hope for your indulgence,—”

“None,” interrupted the Baron, in violent indignation, both at his daughter’s firmness, and also at the confession of her attachment to De Clermont. “The times are changed, indeed, when a maiden like yourself can boldly assume a tone so unbecoming. If you would avoid my heaviest displeasure, prepare yourself for instant and implicit obedience.”

D’Orville had hitherto remained silent, apparently unwilling to interfere between the Baron and his daughter. The firmness with which his gentle, timid cousin had persisted in her refusal, surprised, and even interested him, but never for an instant changed his purpose. He perceived, that for the present further remonstrance was useless. Adèle would not consent to sign the marriage contract. It was, therefore, more advisable to leave her a little time for reflecting on the consequences of her refusal. Besides, the sale of national property, with the threat of which he had quickened the Baron’s harshness to his daughter, would not take place for three months. He had still that hold upon St. Croix’ interest, and in the meanwhile, should fear or persuasion fail in weakening Adèle’s resolution, there was yet time for the employment of more coercive measures. With apparent kindness for his cousin, he addressed her father.

“Allow me, my dear uncle,” he said, “to intercede in Adèle’s behalf. A little delay can make no material difference; and I am persuaded that on

reflection, my fair cousin will be induced to alter her present decision."

"Never, Monsieur D'Orville," said Adèle, firmly. "You deceive yourself if you believe that any time or circumstances can change my present resolution. It was formed only after deep reflection, and with the determination to encounter, if needs must be, the penalty attached to so dreadful an alternative."

"Then you still persist in your obstinate disobedience," said the Baron, in a voice inarticulate with passion.

Adèle was unable to reply.

"Will you, or will you not consent to sign this paper?" he continued; furiously striking his hand upon the open parchment.

"Never," answered Adèle, in a faint voice.

"Then be prepared to meet the consequences of your folly," said the Baron, seizing her shoulder with an iron grasp.

"You may retire, Madam," he added, relinquishing his hold, with a movement which somewhat violently impelled her towards the door.

But Adèle was unable to obey him. She tottered a few paces, and would have fallen to the ground, but that D'Orville sprang forward at the moment, and lifting her in his arms, conveyed the now insensible girl to her chamber.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

"Ambition, like a torrent, ne'er looks back :
It is a swelling, and the last affection
A high mind can put off. It is a rebel
Both to the soul and reason, and enforces
All laws, all conscience, treads upon religion,
And offers violence to nature's self."

Ben Jonson.

It will be believed, that when D'Orville returned to his uncle's library, he found him in no very placable mood. All the evil passions belonging to his character had been called forth, and were now raging with undisputed sway over a mind as much accustomed to exact and receive implicit obedience from others, as it was little used to the exercise of self-control. St. Croix' express commands had been disobeyed—disobeyed, too, by a woman; and that woman, his daughter. The act, in itself, was a crime sufficiently heinous, but the probable consequences

it was likely to engender, rendered it altogether unpardonable. The Baron had offered his daughter in marriage to his nephew, with her rich dowry, as an equivalent for his influence with the President, Robespierre. The success of his election, indeed, he deemed scarcely doubtful, in spite of the hints which D'Orville had thrown out, that it could still only be secured with a severe struggle. But this was but the first step in his career, and it might prove the last, should D'Orville, in requital for his disappointment, endeavour to prejudice the President in his uncle's disfavour. He knew how easily Robespierre's suspicion was aroused: he knew also that the young Jacobin stood high in his confidence; and to these remembrances was added, that of the dreaded sale of national property, which, at one fell swoop, might strip him of the rich domains of Audenach.

By the time D'Orville rejoined his uncle, he had mentally recapitulated the whole catalogue of dreadful consequences which might result from his daughter's contumacy, and had returned with tenfold indignation to her who was the cause of them. But it was by no means the intention of the wily Jacobin to make any show of his displeasure in the present stage of the affair. On the contrary, it was more likely to serve his interests to mollify his uncle, and to induce him to adopt more conciliating measures towards his daughter. He discovered how greatly he had misjudged his cousin's character in imagining

that she would yield at the first harsh command of her father. He was unprepared for Adèle's firm, yet gentle, refusal; and perceived that her consent must be won by other means than those which had yet been attempted. Besides, the Baron's interest was still deeply engaged in the preservation of the lands of Audenach, and the three months which must elapse ere the sale should take place, left him full leisure for employing it to the best advantage.

With these views, D'Orville represented to his uncle the expediency of leaving Adèle a little time to reflect on the consequences of her conduct. He did not seek to interest his paternal affection: he knew the attempt would have been hopeless. He spoke only of the policy of the course pointed out, and of the probability of its success.

"There was no such immediate haste," he said; "a little reflection would no doubt cause his cousin to think differently. It was a pity, indeed, that she had so long been left exposed to the interested designs of Monsieur de Clermont, for the suspicion already communicated to his worthy uncle naturally pointed to *him* as the object of Adèle's unhappy passion. But, after all, her attachment could be but a girlish fancy, which, by keeping her entirely secluded at Audenach, would necessarily expire for lack of the flame by which it had been fed. His sole desire for hastening the marriage had arisen from regard for his uncle's interest in the matter of the national sale, mingled with a perhaps excusable

regret at the prospect of seeing the lands of Audenach, which had been, for so many centuries, the hereditary property of the St. Croix family, parcelled out among strangers. But even this admitted of a trifling delay; and he would not, he could not, believe that his cousin would finally persist in her resolution."

The Baron listened with gratified ears to the moderate tone of his nephew's discourse. He had worked himself up into the anticipation that D'Orville would at least have carried the affair with a high hand, if it were only to enhance the value of the services his uncle required of him. He was, therefore, proportionably soothed and flattered by the young Jacobin's apparent willingness to smooth every difficulty, and was very readily induced to acquiesce in his view of the matter, more particularly as, by so doing, he should, for the present, be left at liberty to prosecute his desired election without interruption. That once concluded, he might, at leisure, adopt proper measures for enforcing Adèle's obedience; for the concluding hints contained in D'Orville's address, sufficiently indicated that a change of purpose was not to be thought of.

It was with mutual expressions of amity and good will, that, on the following morning, the nephew and uncle took leave of each other, after riding together from Audenach as far as the walls of the Haute Ville of Boulogne. From thence, their course lay in different directions: they, therefore, exchanged a

cordial farewell, and separated; the one taking the great route to Paris, the other proceeding to console his constituents for their disappointment of the preceding evening.

In the meanwhile, the unfortunate and innocent cause of such deep anxiety was left undisturbed to reflect on the consequences of the step she had taken. On recovering from her swoon, Adèle found herself alone with the waiting-woman who had been her companion from Paris. For an instant, she was unable to recall the circumstances which had produced her illness; but the talkative Abigail was not long in filling up the blank with her own version of the story, and Adèle became fully sensible of the dreadful scene through which she had just passed. Her attendant had, however, gathered only just sufficient of late events to awaken her curiosity, but not to satisfy it. Poor Adèle was, therefore, obliged to submit to the torturing questions of her inquisitive soubrette, couched, as they were, under the semblance of pity and interest, which seemed to claim her gratitude, and forbid her receiving them in an ungracious manner, though she was unable to reply to them. Worn out, at last, with suffering, and hoping to find in solitude the repose she so much needed, she pleaded an inclination to sleep, and desired to be left alone.

But though the Heiress of Audenach occasionally found in sleep a temporary oblivion of her sorrows, still, in her waking moments, the painfulness of her

present position was felt in all its bitterness. Since the fatal morning on which she had refused to sign the marriage contract, her father had never once deigned to see her. The unquestioned garrulity of her attendant, and an occasional word from Félix Noel (whose interest and attachment for his foster sister caused her to regard him as the only devoted friend upon whom she could rely,) informed her of her father's long and frequent absences from Audenach. The information always brought with it a sense of relief. She could then indulge her unrest by wandering from room to room, or she could stray forth into the little valley, without the fear of encountering her father, whom, of all persons, she most desired, yet most dreaded, to see. Sometimes she entertained the thought of venturing, unbidden, into his presence; of throwing herself at his feet, and imploring his forgiveness. But Adèle's nerves, in their present shattered state, were unequal to the effort. She was tortured with the consciousness of her father's anger, yet she durst not seek his pardon, decided as she still was never to make the concession he required. Thus, day after day passed on in weary monotony, uncheered by a single beam which could light her in her visions of the future.

Marie de Théricourt, in the meanwhile, had not been unmindful of the Baron's proceedings. She had marked all his manœuvres to ensure success. The secret means he had employed—the secret agents he had bribed—were all known to her. It

would have been an easy matter for the popular fortune-teller to have at least retarded his movements, if not to have defeated his schemes altogether. But to have done so would not have answered her purpose; to have thus hastened his fall would have shortened both his suffering and her own enjoyment. She preferred angling with her victim's hopes. She would let him go forth on the wide sea of ambition, like a vessel gallantly trimmed, and then, having raised the storm, she would, one by one, drag from him every successive plank to which he might have clung for support. Of these, she knew that his dependance upon D'Orville was the most powerful. It was her interest, then, to foment, if possible, a quarrel between the Baron and his nephew; and Marie lacked neither the means nor the ability necessary to attain her end. Meanwhile, she watched, with exulting derision, the toil and trouble with which the Baron was himself weaving the net that should entangle him. Nay, she even seemed to lend herself to his views by furthering the desired success which was to lead to his destruction.

Thus matters stood, as the eventful day of election was approaching. Eventful, truly it was to France, and to all Europe; for from the legislators about to be chosen as the representatives of the people, emanated those first outpourings of organized atrocity which led to results so fatal to the prosperity of France—so destructive to the happiness of thousands of her children.

At Boulogne, the tree of liberty had been planted in the preceding July, on several points both of the Old and New Town. On the *Place d'Armes*, in particular, a lofty poplar reared its head, which was surmounted by the bonnet rouge—the emblem of liberty.

As St. Croix rode into the square, on the morning which was to decide his fate, he found it filled with a multitude of persons of both sexes, who greeted the appearance of their favourite champion with a general shout of applause. The plaudits were redoubled, when St. Croix, having ridden onwards towards the centre of the square, in which their chosen symbol was planted, checked his horse a moment, and, reverently doffing his hat, made a low obeisance. "*Vive la Liberté !*" "*Vive notre Député !*" echoed round him. But St. Croix waited not to listen to the clamour. He spurred his horse on, and in a few minutes had reached the appointed place where the electors were to give in their decision.

The active business of the election had been despatched previously. The closing ceremony, therefore, required but a very short space of time; at the expiration of which, Victor, *ci-devant* Baron de St. Croix, rejoiced in the degradation of calling himself the people's chosen representative in the forthcoming Legislative Assembly. The news was not slow in reaching Audenach, and they were soon confirmed by the return of the Deputy himself. In the

first moment of his exultation, he had no thought to bestow on aught beside the duties of his new station, with the vision of future honours to which he hoped it might lead. By degrees, his dreams of aggrandizement led him to think on the means by which they were to be realized; and of these, the first requisite step was his immediate departure for Paris. This, again, conducted to the recollection of his daughter; but here his lucubrations were of a less pleasing cast. What should he do with her? Take her with him to Paris? All well, provided she would consent to an immediate union with her cousin. Otherwise, he should but defeat his own purpose, in carrying her to the very spot, where, notwithstanding all his precautions, she might, by some chance, contrive to see De Clermont; and would, at all events, support herself with the hope of doing so. Should Adèle still prove refractory, (and, in spite of his former confidence, he shrewdly suspected such would be the case, though he scarce would acknowledge the supposition even to himself,) what course, then, should he pursue? To leave her alone at Audenach was impossible. He had no guardian sufficiently trusty to place over her, and the evil resulting from her residence under Madame de Beaumont's roof, had taught him the necessity for caution. What, then, should he do? He would see his daughter, and once more offer to her his forgiveness on the promise of submission to his will. He would even strive first to win her consent by softer words—to

ask it as a token of duty and affection for himself. And should all fail—should Adèle still persist in her refusal—what then? A fresh determination occurred to the Baron, but we must reserve it for another chapter.

CHAPTER XXIX.

"I'll have a priest shall preach her from her faith,
And make it sin not to renounce that vow,
Which I'd have broken."

ON the evening of the newly-elected Deputy's triumphant return to Audenach, Adèle de St. Croix was once more summoned to the presence of her father. It was with a feeling of dread, amounting almost to awe, that she prepared to obey; and yet, amid her fears, a latent unacknowledged hope still lurked that her father, upon maturer consideration, might have been induced to relax in his severity towards her. The impression was confirmed by the softened look and manner with which he received her. The Baron, indeed, was at that moment inclined to be in good humour with himself, and all the world beside. He was won, too, by the meek, respectful demeanour of his daughter, and was equally ready to receive her submission, and to accord his own forgiveness in return.

"Sit down, Adèle;" he said, in as kind a tone as he could command, perceiving that she hesitated to do so, and was yet scarcely able to stand. "I have hitherto banished you from my presence," continued the Baron, "because I wished, by so doing, to mark my displeasure at your conduct, as well as to afford you time for undisturbed reflection upon its impropriety. I would fain believe, that ere this you will have seen the expediency of enabling me, by your contrition for the past, and promise of amendment for the future, to put an end to a punishment which it has given me so much pain to inflict."

"If the infliction of the heaviest misfortune which has yet befallen me," said Adèle, "may seem sufficient atonement for my offence—if the deepest regret at having incurred your displeasure, and the most ardent desire of forgiveness, may induce you to extend your pardon to me, then should I, indeed, be relieved from a weight of misery almost overpowering. But if,—"

"Hear me, Adèle;" interrupted her father, unwilling so soon to listen to the reserving clause which he apprehended she was about to utter; "I am ready to believe in the sincerity of the dutiful sentiments you have professed; but something more than mere words is necessary to prove that my confidence is not ill-founded. What matters it to speak of your sorrow at my anger—your desire for forgiveness—or your wish to regain my good opinion and affection,

if you reject the only means by which they are to be obtained. In seeking this union with your cousin, my only object could be the promotion of your interest and advantage. What, indeed, could be so dear to me as the happiness of my daughter?" Adèle was deeply moved. The Baron saw his advantage and proceeded—

"These were the motives by which I was first actuated; and as a substantial proof of my regard, I had determined to give you the rich lands of Audenach, as your marriage portion."

"I am grateful, most grateful," said Adèle, with emotion, as her father paused to allow time for his words to make the desired impression.

"Other reasons have since sprung up," continued the Baron, "of a different nature, with which it is proper you should be made acquainted. I am threatened with a seizure of the lands of Audenach, to be sold as government property, and parcelled out among strangers. Your cousin is the only person who has influence sufficient to avert a calamity so dreadful, a blow so fatal to the prosperity of the house of St. Croix; but even *he* is unable to interfere in the matter, unless his marriage with its heiress, and consequent personal interest in the estate, shall seem to afford him a plausible pretext for so doing. Perhaps, some spark of family pride may influence you, since your love and gratitude for me are so small as to have no weight in the scale."

"Alas!" said Adèle, in deep agitation; "can I then only hope to purchase my father's affection by proving myself unworthy of it?"

"Submission to a parent's commands, Adèle," said her father, "can scarcely be an unworthy return for the affection by which only those commands were dictated."

Adèle paused a moment in reflection, ere she replied.

"My father," she said, at last, "your goodness had destined the lands of Audenach for my wedding portion. They would, therefore, at my marriage, have been transferred from your possession to that of my cousin, as future representative of the house of St. Croix. His near relationship fully qualifies him for the distinction. Let me pray you, then, to put aside, in his favour, any claim I might have on the domain of Audenach, and to transfer it to him, unencumbered by an appendage, which to him cannot but be utterly valueless."

"You speak of what you are unable to comprehend, Adèle," said the Baron, growing impatient at her resistance. "You ask what is impossible. The estate of Audenach must either descend to you as my heir, to be preserved through the influence of your cousin, or it must be torn piecemeal in the manner I have told you. With you, then, must rest this momentous decision. But I am weary of this continued obstinacy. I tell you frankly, that if you still persist in refusing the union with your cousin,

no other marriage vow, with my consent, shall ever pass your lips."

"Be it so," said Adèle; "it were better to abide so cruel an alternative, than to be guilty of so great a crime as that of offering to my cousin the perjured promise of affections already pledged,—"


"To one who is the avowed enemy of his country," interrupted the Baron, in rising indignation; "who scrupled not to shed the blood of those patriots who were about to rid France of the cause of all her woes—to one, who not content with inflicting his ill deeds upon the public, has thought fit clandestinely to insinuate himself into the affections of Mademoiselle de St. Croix, simply because, he believed her to be the Heiress of Audenach."

"You do the Count de Clermont wrong," said Adèle, a slight colour tinging her before pallid cheek. "His noble nature is incapable of the motives you describe; and ill should I requite his generous attachment, by breaking that plighted faith which never, never, shall be given to another."

"I have had enough of this sentimental foolery," said the Baron, sternly, waving his hand for her to retire. "A few weeks hence, your tone will be somewhat changed, I imagine. You will prepare yourself, Mademoiselle, to leave Audenach to-morrow;" and Adèle departed to ruminate over the new and unknown home which was to be her destination.

On the following morning, she learned that her father had ridden to Boulogne at an early hour. His

return was followed up by the intimation, that in two hours she should hold herself in readiness for departure. At the appointed time, she was conducted to a hired carriage which was in waiting ; and with old Pierre for her only companion, the vehicle took the road towards Boulogne. Having reached the walls of the High Town, and passed beneath one of its arched gateways, they traversed the narrow streets, and at length stopped before a tall dark-looking building, bearing no outward mark of human habitation. At first, Adèle imagined she was entering a prison ; but the dress of the female who answered the application of Pierre to the bell for admittance, quieted her apprehensions, by presenting the appearance of a lay sister, of the Ursuline Order of Nuns. She was about, then, to become an inmate of their Convent, and it was with a sense of relief that she found herself entering its peaceful walls. A few minutes brought her to the little parlour, where, after waiting as she had been desired, for about a quarter of an hour, the door flew wide open, and the Lady Abbess, with two sisters as her attendants, entered. She was a tall, stern-looking woman of about fifty, whose hard rigid features harmonized well with her stately and commanding deportment. Brought up from her earliest childhood in the convent of which she was now Superior, the world beyond, was to her but as a vast sea of crime and misery, of which she knew, and desired to know, nothing. She was unable to comprehend how that social virtues could be practised in the



midst of such pollution. She was incapable of appreciating those sacred duties which are appointed to man, equally as a bond of union with his fellow-creatures, and as a source of innocent happiness to himself, and the performance of which constitutes, at once, one of the most difficult, as it is also one of the most acceptable services to the Creator. Shut out from all intercourse with the world, and, consequently, sheltered from the dangerous excitements which might have aroused those passions that lay dormant in her bosom, she believed herself to be wholly exempt from them. Hence, she learned to look upon human weakness as a crime—forgetful that the crime consists, not in the existence of passions, which are inseparable from humanity, but in the indulgence of them. Hence, too, her dominion over the sisterhood of which she was Superior, was one of uncompromising severity. The offender could hope for no mercy—the penitent for no pardon—the diligent for no commendation.

Such was the monitress to whom Adèle de St. Croix was entrusted, with directions from her father, to chastise her ill-placed attachment, and reclaim her disobedience, in whatever manner might be deemed most fitting.


Adèle had arisen on the entrance of her forbidding-looking hostess, and stood in silent deference to her age and station, uncertain of the reception she was about to experience.

“Your father has thought fit,” said the Abbess;

“to entrust to me the task of recalling you to a sense of duty, against which, I am informed, you have grievously offended. He has wisely judged, that the exercise of prayer, and the chastisements of our holy religion, with a brief retirement from that sinful world by which you have been perverted, may, under the blessing of Heaven, work a change in your sinful and depraved heart; and may God, in his mercy,” (here she raised her eyes upwards,) “bless my humble endeavours for the fulfilment of so pious a purpose. Your duties will commence at vespers this evening, by which time you will be furnished with a dress more suitable than your present garb, for the lowly penitence of a contrite sinner. The intervening hours will be best spent in the solitude of your cell, where, by prayer and meditation, you will prepare yourself for the holy office that is to follow.”

Then, turning to one of her attendants, she gave orders that Adele should be conducted to her narrow chamber, in a tone which savoured more of worldly pride than of christian charity.

When the poor victim of parental tyranny found herself at last, once more, alone, her first impulse was to cast herself upon the hard pallet which was to serve as her bed, and covering her face with her hands, as if to shut out the objects by which she was surrounded, she burst into an agony of tears. Never had she felt so completely miserable—so utterly desolate and friendless, as when thus thrown among strangers—placed at the mercy of a harsh



task-mistress, and cut off from all communication with those whom she loved, or from whom she might have hoped for consolation or assistance. And, when at last, she *did* venture to look round upon her narrow cell—upon the straw pallet—the deal table—the single chair—the iron-grated lattice window, how chilling was its desolation—how bitter the comparison which forced itself upon her, as she remembered the little sunny chamber on the banks of the Seine—the companionship of Madame de Beaumont—and of one dearer still! As the hour of vespers approached, the dress of a novice was brought to her, and Adèle, having put it on and followed her conductress to the chapel, took the place appointed her among the sisterhood, unknowing and unknown.

CHAPTER XXX.

"O, false ambition,
Whither hast thou lur'd me !
E'en to this giddy height where now I stand
Forsaken, comfortless, with not a friend
In whom my soul can trust."

Barbarossa.

ABOUT the same hour, the Baron de St. Croix took his leave of Audenach, and proceeded on his road to Paris. To trace the course of his popularity; to detail his harangues in the Assembly, or the means by which he succeeded in winning the favour of the President Robespierre, belongs less to the novelist than to the historian. On the subject of his Audenach estates, only, did he entertain any real uneasiness, and this apprehension gradually increased as the momentous period of the sale drew near. Without compromising himself, he had sufficiently unfolded his views to the Abbess of the Ursuline Convent, to induce her, by any means, to enforce, if possible, Adèle's obedience, before the expiration of the

prescribed period. The good mother lent a willing ear to his wishes, for she was well pleased to win the favour of the powerful Deputy St. Croix, at a time when the immunities of the church had already been severely shaken, and were not unlikely to be abolished altogether.

But in spite of threats, remonstrance, penance, and suffering, Adèle remained firm to her vow. She listened with patience; she endured with meekness and submission. Her health, indeed, was beginning to decline beneath the penances and privations to which she was subjected, but her resolution was as unalterable as ever. The Baron, therefore, deserted by his nephew, whose interest no longer claimed his interference, was obliged to set out alone on his return to Boulogne, early in December.

It was with fear and trepidation that he again approached the home which might so soon be wrested from him; but he still hoped that his increased interest and popularity would avert the impending evil. And so, perhaps, it might; but that an unseen hand dashed the cup of triumph from his lips at the very moment he thought it the most secure.

Marie de Théricourt, who deemed the fitting moment now arrived for commencing her long-delayed career of vengeance, raised such a popular outcry against the injustice of suffering so large a domain as that of Audenach to remain untouched by the hand of power, that at last the Baron saw himself stripped of the whole of the rich estate,

which was torn from him piecemeal. Marie even carried her malice still further. She caused her unfortunate victim to be called for by his delighted fellow-citizens, to receive their vociferous thanks for the sacrifice he had made in their favour. St. Croix could not choose, but obey. Neither could he avoid the necessity of returning an appropriate address, setting forth the readiness, at all times, and the peculiar happiness in the present instance, with which he had relinquished his private interests when called upon to do so by the voice, and for the good of the people.

To the fortune-teller, who could trace in the contortions of his countenance while he was speaking, every discordant jar between his honied words, and his bitter disappointment, the exhibition afforded scope for the gratification of every malignant and revengeful feeling. But the Deputy himself, was so disgusted with the issue of the affair, that he was unable to remain near the scene of his defeat, and, therefore, determined to start instantly for Paris, in the hope of finding there, some better fortune to console him for the ill-luck which he had left behind. Without staying to make one enquiry for his daughter, (whose very existence, indeed, was, for the moment, wholly banished from his recollection,) he threw himself into the Diligence, and was soon far advanced on his route to the capital.

CHAPTER XXXI.

“ Dans ces murs tous sanglans, des peuples malheureux,
Unis contre leur prince, et divisés entre eux
Jouets infortunés des fureurs intestines
De leur triste patrie avançant les ruines ;
Le tumulte au dedans, le péril aux dehors,
Et partout le débris, le carnage, et les morts.”

Voltaire's Henriade.

WE took leave of Alphonse de Clermont on the night of his parting with Adèle de St. Croix, in the little valley of Audenach. We will not pause to enquire into the thoughts which occupied him while he pursued his sad and solitary walk towards Boulogne, since, uncheered as they were, by any security for the present, or any definite prospect for the future, they could not but be of an intensely painful nature. Frequently De Clermont paused, in the hope of catching one more glimpse of the spot rendered sacred by the presence of his beloved. But ere long, the mansion at Audenach, and the little valley in which it was situated, were hidden from his view

amid the surrounding darkness ; and when, for the last time, he had gazed towards them, and had waved his hand in token of adieu, as though she to whom the action was addressed could have seen and replied to it, he turned away, and quickening his pace, had soon reached the walls of Boulogne. Pursuing the descent of the Grande Rue, he took his way towards the Port where the vessel lay moored that was to bear him on his voyage. The wind was still unfavourable ; but as it was very likely to change during the night, and as the packet would then set sail without a moment's delay, De Clermont continued pacing up and down the quay, rather than return to the town to seek the rest for which he felt so little inclined.

Towards morning the wind changed ; and ere Adèle had arisen from her couch to watch its progress, her lover was already advancing on his voyage to England.

It is not necessary to the thread of our narrative, to trace very minutely the details of De Clermont's journey. Suffice it to say, that he reached Germany in safety ; and at Coblenz, was admitted to the presence of the members of the Bourbon family, then residing there. He scarcely required the Queen's signet ring to ensure their confidence. To some of them he was already personally known, and all were acquainted with the circumstances of his gallant defence of the 6th of October. At Vienna, his reception was equally satisfactory.

Having thus delivered the papers with which he had been entrusted, and received the answers to them, he set forward on his return to Paris, by the way of Strasburg; it having been agreed that, to avoid suspicion, he should chose a different route to that by which he had left France. On his arrival in the capital, he contrived, through the agency of a trusty dependant, to convey the precious documents into the hands of the Queen. The unfortunate Princess needed all the consolation they contained; for the hope of an amelioration in public affairs, which had accompanied the acceptance of the new Constitution, had now wholly vanished, and her own position, with that of the whole of the Royal Family, had become more irksome than ever.

Soothed by the words of sympathy of which De Clermont had been the bearer; indulging the delusive hope of still receiving succour from abroad; and gratified with the zeal and prudence of her messenger, Marie Antoinette again claimed his services on a similar mission, and again the call was answered with alacrity and diligence.

During several successive months, De Clermont was unremittingly employed in the same manner; and on each occasion, he had the good fortune, or the superior prudence, both to avoid discovery and to fulfil his task to the entire satisfaction of his Royal Mistress, in spite of the difficulties and dangers which necessarily opposed themselves to his success.

Whether the unceasing claim upon his loyalty, which denied him a moment's leisure to bestow on other matters, was exactly consonant with his wishes, we will not attempt to decide. The young royalist endeavoured, as much as possible, to devote his whole thoughts and energies to the accomplishment of the charge entrusted to him, permitting himself only the gratification of seeing Madame de Beaumont on each of his flying visits to Paris, to hear from her whatever intelligence concerning Adèle she was able to afford.

With his aunt lay the only source from whence he could hope for information, for the necessary precaution of leaving France, and returning to it on each expedition, by a different course, had precluded the possibility of his revisiting Boulogne. The account, however, of his betrothed, which reached him through this channel, was such as entirely quieted his apprehensions. The Baron de St. Croix, on reaching Paris, had immediately sought out Madame de Beaumont; not, indeed, with the intention of censuring her conduct towards himself in the matter of his daughter, but with the view of blinding her to the real circumstances in which Adèle was now placed. Where, indeed, was the heinous crime of having sanctioned an attachment to the Count de Clermont, whose rank, fortune, and consideration, fully entitled him to a still higher alliance? St. Croix saw the futility of any objection he could possibly produce. Under different circumstances, he would, in all probability, have eagerly sought such a

marriage for his daughter. But the case was changed here—De Clermont was a royalist. He had, moreover, presumed to seek the affections of Adèle, without having previously consulted her father; and, worse than all, his daughter had dared to bestow those affections, and had completed her audacity by an act of disobedience, which had materially affected his own interests. He did not choose, however, to encounter the arguments of Madame de Beaumont; still less to acquaint her either with what had passed, or with the cause of Adèle's imprisonment, for her seclusion in the Ursuline Convent was, in fact, nothing less. It would, besides, be madness, he thought, to awaken De Clermont's resentment, which might induce him to adopt violent measures for the liberation of his betrothed bride. St. Croix, therefore, merely informed Madame de Beaumont, that he had judged it expedient not to bring his daughter to Paris in the present dangerously unsettled state of public affairs. He had, therefore, he said, removed her from the solitude of Audenach to the charge of a worthy and excellent woman, the Abbess of the Ursuline Convent of Boulogne. The epistolary correspondence of his daughter and her valued friend, might still continue, for he had directed that Adèle's letters should be forwarded in the weekly packet which reached him from Audenach, and those of Madame de Beaumont could be returned through the same channel. In what manner St. Croix fulfilled this engagement, we leave the reader to

judge. He was completely successful, however, in deceiving Madame de Beaumont; and the false views which he had led her to adopt, equally conveyed themselves to her nephew.

To De Clermont, they formed a source of unqualified satisfaction. He now believed, that the predictions of the fortune-teller were utterly groundless—that the projected union with her cousin was a wilful fabrication of his own; and, at all events, he felt assured, that in her present retreat, Adèle was peaceably sheltered from every danger to which a less secluded home might have exposed her. Consoling himself for their temporary separation with these delicious reflections, and looking forward with brightened hope to the future, the young royalist pursued his endeavours in the Royal cause, with an energy which spurned difficulty, and contemned danger, cheered onward by the prospect of the sweet reward he promised himself when his task should be ended.

Thus month after month rolled on. The winter came and went; and luxuriant summer had run through nearly half its course. It was in the first days of August, that De Clermont once more returned to Paris with secret despatches for the Queen. The state of public feeling ever since the frightful 20th of June, when a licensed and lawless rabble had forced themselves into the Palace of the Tuileries, and to the very presence of the King himself, announced that some fearful crisis was at hand. Marie

Antoinette, still clinging to the hope of foreign aid, and aware, that from no other quarter could she hope for succour, hastened to prepare a fresh appeal to the Austrian Court; and having caused it to be conveyed to De Clermont, the 10th of August was fixed for his again leaving Paris.

Even those most imperfectly acquainted with the disastrous history of the period, will remember, and shudder at the remembrance, how awfully the worst prognostics were fulfilled in the horrors of that memorable day.

In the middle of the preceding night the tocsin sounded, and the drums beat to arms. At day-break, a furious and armed rabble invested the Palace of the Tuileries, seconded by a band of Marsellois and nearly the whole of the National Guard, and it became but too evident, that a struggle of the most fearful nature was about to take place.

De Clermont, therefore, instead of fulfilling his intention of departure, rose at the dawn of day, and hastening to the Palace, joined the gallant band of royalist gentlemen, who, with courage worthy of a better fate, had ranged themselves in one of the apartments, self-constituted guards to their unfortunate Sovereigns. To these were added the devoted Swiss Guards, who were ready to peril life and limb in the same good cause.

But what could avail the bravery of a handful of men, opposed to the overwhelming numbers of the insurgents without, more especially where the Castle

afforded too small means of defence to admit the hope of successful resistance. To have permitted the Royal Family to remain spectators of so unequal a conflict, would have been to expose them to certain destruction. The expediency of retiring was, therefore, suggested to the King, and he was, with extreme difficulty, prevailed on to take shelter with his family in the bosom of the Legislative Assembly.

With some difficulty, De Clermont managed to gain the foot of the great staircase of the Palace, at the moment the Royal Family were descending it—for the last time! They had already passed on, when, perceiving how narrow was the passage permitted by the unruly mob for their exit, the idea occurred to him, that he might afford better service to the Royal fugitives, by accompanying them in their short passage to the Legislative Assembly, than by retaining his present position. Making his way through the crowd, he at last succeeded in placing himself close to the Queen; and by sustaining the pressure of the ruffians who closed round, regardless of her sex and station, he was enabled considerably to diminish the annoyance, and to relieve her terror.

As Marie Antoinette looked up to ascertain who was her protector, it was with some surprise that she perceived De Clermont. Seizing a moment, when the pressure of the crowd had impelled him nearer to her than before, she said, in a low hurried voice, "I thank you; but you can serve me better still than by remaining here."

"In an hour, Madam, you shall be obeyed," answered De Clermont in the same tone, comprehending that she referred to the speedy delivery of the packet entrusted to him. They had now reached their place of refuge, and as the King and Queen, followed by their family, entered, De Clermont stood anxiously gazing after them till they had disappeared within the Hall of the Legislative Assembly. He had, indeed, beheld his unfortunate Sovereigns for the last time!

It is needless to detail the horrible scenes, during which, on that fatal day, the streets of Paris were deluged with the blood of five thousand victims to the popular fury! They belong to history; but are unconnected with our tale, since De Clermont had no part in them.

On quitting the Queen, he immediately hastened homewards, and having secreted his papers in the best manner he was able, and placed a large tricoloured cockade in his hat, to ensure a free passage through the mob, he passed forth by a secondary entrance, and gained the Boulevards. These, and all the adjoining streets, were thronged with a tumultuous rabble, with detachments of the National Guard, and bands of Marsellois, all hastening to the scene of action. The frightful events which were passing there, were sufficiently indicated by the roaring of cannon, the discharge of musketry, and the horrible yells of the populace. The badge of

liberty, which De Clermont had adopted, procured him an unmolested passage, save when an occasional exclamation of surprize burst from some of the most furious of the rabble, at his choosing the contrary direction to that in which they were so eagerly hastening.

It was in the hope of reaching the residence of his friend, De Raunaye, that the young royalist was endeavouring to make his way through the mass of humanity by which his progress was obstructed. The house was situated in a part of the city sufficiently distant to be, in some measure, free from the tumult which raged in the vicinity of the Tuileries. Its master was absent; and De Clermont guessed but too truly, on what service he was gone. On the previous day, a horse of his own had been sent to his friend's house, from whence he had intended to start on his journey that morning at day-break. On reaching the Hotel Raunaye, he desired it might be saddled, and having mounted, pursued his way towards the barrier, not without some uneasiness, lest any fresh obstacle should there present itself. On approaching the guard-house, he perceived, by the sound of voices within, that those to whom it had been entrusted were at their post. He had hoped that their curiosity, and the impunity which the moment seemed to offer, would have induced their absence. De Clermont rode boldly up to the gate, and had already passed nearly half through the

archway, when a loud "Holla!" intimated that he had been observed, and that it was more prudent to pause. He checked his horse, but without retreating.

"*Vous allez trop vite,*" said the single soldier who made his appearance, with a swaggering familiarity which smacked of the spirit of the times; "*Votre passeport mon brave?*" and he held out his hand to receive it.

De Clermont drew the paper from his pocket and presented it.

"No; no;" said the man. "This might have done yesterday; but for to-day, *ma foi c'est tout autre chose*. So you must just turn your horse's head round again. You'll find warm work enough down yonder to console you. A curse upon the ill-luck that keeps me from helping at it!"

"Surely, my friend, you mistake," said De Clermont. Oblige me by examining my *passeport* once more. You will find that it is all in form, and signed by the proper authorities."

"And pray who are the proper authorities?" enquired his tormentor, with a look half comic, half devilish. "Why, I tell you, if this is signed only by such authorities, it is worth no more than the crown on the King's head, or the head itself, mayhap! So turn back, if you please, for you will not pass the gates without Santerre's signature; and he has other work on his hands to-day, beside the turning of a crow-quill."

De Clermont saw that remonstrance was useless,

and a farther appearance of anxiety to be gone, might create suspicion. To apply for the signature of the atrocious Santerre, would be to entail almost certain discovery on his expedition. He must, therefore, carry his point by a *coup de main*, or give it up altogether. The wary guard stood near the head of his horse, as if in readiness to arrest any attempt at proceeding.

“Well, my friend, I suppose, then, the case is hopeless,” he said; “but *there* is something to drink to our fellowship in the good cause;” and he threw a piece of money on the pavement. The guard stooped not to raise it, but for an instant his eye was turned towards the spot where it lay. At the same moment, De Clermont applied the spur sharply to the high spirited charger on which he was mounted. With a violent movement, it reared suddenly upright on its hind legs. The astonished soldier sprang aside, while his comrades rushed out to his assistance. But the moment was past. With the speed of an arrow from a bow, the noble animal darted forward. A few shots whizzed past the rider; but pursuit became utterly hopeless.

CHAPTER XXXII.

"The king shalt have my service ; but my prayers
For ever, and for ever, shall be yours."

Shakspeare.

It will be believed that De Clermont did not relax his speed till he was sufficiently distant from the capital, to be quite beyond the reach of his pursuers. He had made choice of his father's grey charger to bear him on his journey, as the fleetest horse in his possession, (for he anticipated some such adventure as that which had befallen him,) and the noble animal, as if conscious how much depended on his speed, pursued his course with an untiring velocity, which very soon baffled all pursuit. De Clermont's difficulties, however, did not end here ; for on several other occasions his courage and address were equally called into action. He succeeded, nevertheless, in fulfilling the object of his mission ; and such was the diligence he employed, that by the end of August he was

already on his voyage to England, from whence he purposed re-entering France, by the way of Boulogne.

He once more landed safely at the little port whence he had taken so sorrowful a departure nearly a year previously. How different were the feelings with which he now returned to it! Then—all the future had been dark and fathomless as the ocean which lay stretched before him. Now—he was approaching the spot which contained the being dearest to him on earth. Their separation was nearly over. Yet a little while, and he should claim Adèle as his own. He should bear her from her present peaceful retreat to the home of his fathers—his wedded bride!

It required no small resolution on the part of De Clermont to pass through Boulogne without visiting Audenach. He, nevertheless, decided on doing so, as the urgency of his mission admitted of no delay. Accordingly, the moment he had landed, he proceeded to the custom-house, to go through the required formalities; but here an unforeseen cause of delay presented itself. None of the authorities were present, (for at that period the regulation of all public offices was in a lamentably defective state.) His baggage could not be examined for several hours—he must necessarily postpone his departure, at least, till night. Finding that no choice was left him, De Clermont, not very reluctantly, determined to avail himself of the few intervening hours to search out the abode of

Adèle. He had no difficulty in discovering the Ursuline Convent, and no misgiving, as its bell loudly pealed his request for admittance. He had never paused to ask himself whether he should be permitted to see Adèle. The possibility of denial had never once occurred to him. She was there simply as a boarder, in companionship with several other young persons; and, as such, was of course exempt from the restrictions imposed upon the secluded sisters. What then was his astonishment at the only answer returned to his enquiries. His request for entrance was wholly inadmissible, more particularly, as the person whom he sought, was not, nor ever had been an inmate of the Convent. He must doubtless be mistaken, for the very name of St. Croix was unknown within its walls. It was in vain that De Clermont urged a more satisfactory reply. It was in vain that he described Adèle, and named the period at which he had been told that she was removed to Boulogne. The same answer was returned to all his interrogatories; and he was forced at last to depart with all his fear renewed, and with the agonizing belief that some horrible mystery overhung the fate of the unfortunate Heiress of Audenach.

His only chance of obtaining some better information, was by repairing to her father's mansion, towards which he now directed his steps with the utmost speed he could command. Soon, the trees of the little valley were seen in the distance—gradually they become more and more distinct.

De Clermont approached the narrow path so often before mentioned. Another minute, and he stood facing the dwelling of the Baron de St. Croix. Did his eyes deceive him, or could that be the spot which he had visited, indeed, but once before—but every feature of which was indelibly impressed upon his memory? De Clermont stood motionless, as he gazed upon the surrounding scene of desolation. The mansion-house was entirely closed and apparently uninhabited. The once smooth and well-rolled gravel sweep was now defaced by deep ruts, the unrepaired ravages of the previous winter's rains, now parched and hardened by an August sun. The iron gate was flung wide open, as if to challenge the audacity of the passer by, who should venture into the wilderness within; and the flowers which might once have tempted him—the roses and honeysuckles which had once twined so luxuriantly round the iron balustrade—which had been old Toinon's pride, and Adèle's delight, now drooped their heads, or trailed along the ground, neglected and uncared for. And those who had been wont to tend them so heedfully!—where were they? Poor old Toinon was already removed from all earthly care. He could not survive the change that had come over the fortunes of his master's house. His occupation was gone. The links that had bound him to life were broken. He had pined a few months, and then—died! And Adèle—where was she? Where, indeed—was the question with which, again and again, De Clermont

tortured himself. He passed on towards the little valley. It had shared the general change. Many of its trees lay felled to the ground. Its shades had been invaded by the axe of the licensed wood cutter; and the spot on which he had rested with Adèle, now lay exposed to the broiling heat of the noontide sun.

De Clermont turned with disgust from what seemed little less than sacrilege, and was hastily retracing his steps, when a footstep behind him caused him to arrest his progress, in the hope of obtaining some solution to the mystery of desolation by which he was surrounded. The person who approached, and to whom De Clermont addressed his enquiries, was a young man of the lower class.

"You must be strange in these parts," said he, in answer to his questioner, "or you would know that the estate of Audenach had passed away from the family of St. Croix, and was sold as national property, many months since."

De Clermont started, for the transaction was new to him. "I am, indeed, almost a stranger at Audenach," said he; "yet still deeply interested in those who so lately owned it. It is not of the place, but of the family I would enquire. Of Mademoiselle de St. Croix. Know you ought of *her*?"

The young man looked curiously up in De Clermont's face, in which the deepest anxiety was plainly manifest. "Then you can be no other than the Count de Clermont," said he, continuing his steadfast gaze while he spoke.

De Clermont started again ; but anxiety was this time deeply mingled with his surprise. He was travelling under a feigned name, and yet this rustic had in some inexplicable manner discovered him. For obvious reasons, it was of the last importance he should be deceived.

"My name, and the motives for my enquiries," said he, evasively, and with as much unconcern as he could command, "can matter little." He paused a moment, in expectation of a reply ; but the peasant remained silent. Suddenly recollecting himself, De Clermont drew from his breast the *passeport* he carried, and presenting it to his companion, "This, perhaps," he said, "will suffice to satisfy your curiosity ; and for whatever information it is in your power to afford, I am both able and willing to reward you."

The young man attentively examined the paper, and then resuming his scrutiny of De Clermont's features ; "Since you are not the Count de Clermont, then," said he, advancing a step, as though he would have passed on, "You can be little interested in the fate of Adèle de St. Croix. Of what import is it to a stranger whether she be dead or living ?"

De Clermont gasped for breath as he laid his hand on the rustic's arm to arrest his departure.

"If you know aught of her whom you have named, whether it be good or evil," he said in a hollow voice, "I conjure you, by all that is sacred, to speak it. Nay, you stir not hence till I am answered."

"It is not in my power wholly to satisfy you," said the peasant; "even though I do know you to be the Count de Clermont, the betrothed husband of Adèle de St. Croix, and that the purport of your visit to Audenach was solely to seek the information you require of me. You may persist in your denial if you will, but I forewarn you, that by doing so, you cannot deceive me; while you will cast away your only chance of solving the mystery which overhangs the fate of her you were wont to love so well."

Whether it was that the peasant's manner irresistibly won De Clermont's confidence, or whether his anxiety overpowered every other consideration, certain it is that prudence and caution in a moment vanished.

"Call me what you will," he exclaimed; "but torture me no longer with these words of doubt and mystery."

"I repeat, that I am unable to answer you with any other," replied the peasant. "Would to God that it were otherwise; not more for your sake than for my own. But we are bound on the same errand, Count de Clermont. Will you then accompany me to the only spot where our fears may possibly be set at rest?"

"Lead on;" said De Clermont, without further enquiry; and with hasty steps his companion took the route towards Boulogne.

The reader may perhaps have divined that the peasant was no other than Félix Noel, the foster-

brother of Adèle, whose connection with Marie De Théricourt, had made him perfectly acquainted with the circumstances of Adèle's attachment; and the information thus obtained led to his detection of her lover. As the two young men proceeded together, Félix gave to De Clermont the only information his utmost endeavours had succeeded in procuring, relative to the fate of his foster-sister. Adèle had, he said, been conveyed from Audenach to the Ursuline Convent, nearly twelve months previously. He knew it through a channel which did not admit the possibility of doubt; for he had, in fact, won the secret from old Pierre, who was her conductor on the occasion. Beyond this point, the fate of Mademoiselle de St. Croix was involved in impenetrable mystery. He had been unremitting in his enquiries for Adèle's health, or even for her existence, at the convent gate, but the invariable answer was, that no such person had ever entered its walls. "The lay sister who keeps the gate, is my mother's own niece," continued Félix. "She would not, I am convinced, deceive me, for Thérèse is too great a gossip to hold any secret beyond a few hours. She must, therefore, be deceived herself; and all this concealment has awakened suspicions so terrible, that they must, and shall be set at rest."

"But by what means?" enquired De Clermont, anxiously.

"Through the agency of my cousin," answered Félix, "She has betrayed to me, that a religious cere-

mony is to take place, this day, in the convent chapel, which the Abbess has commanded shall be kept a profound secret, and to which, consequently, no strangers will be admitted. I am resolved to witness it, and you shall accompany me. If Adèle be in the convent, she will, doubtless, be present. Having satisfied ourselves on this point, we can afterwards devise means for her liberation."

De Clermont had no time for reply. They had already reached the convent gate, and Félix had given the three gentle knocks which were his usual signal for admittance. In another minute the lock was raised, and the gate was sufficiently unclosed to allow the good-humoured, but somewhat time-worn face of Thérèse to make its appearance.

"Thou cans't not enter to-day, Félix," said she, in a whisper, and without perceiving De Clermont, who stood a little aside. "Thou knowest wherefore."

"Thou cans't not refuse me, Thérèse," answered Félix; at the same time, with gentle force, enlarging the aperture sufficiently to make good his entrance. De Clermont could perceive from without that the poor sister was sorely beset in the peril to which her own imprudence had exposed her. The words that first reached him were those of positive and almost angry denial. Then came expostulation and entreaty. By degrees these died away, and at last the gate was gently unclosed, and he himself was admitted.

"Oh Félix, Félix! if my Lady Abbess should

discover this," exclaimed the terrified Thérèse, in a half whimper.

"*V'la ma belle, ne t'inquietes pas,*" said Félix, in a soothing tone. "We will be prudent, I promise thee." With steps quickened by fear, the sister led the way through a side door, and up a narrow stair, followed by the two young men. At the head of the first flight, they reached a thick oaken door, to which she applied a key from the large bunch hanging at her girdle. The two entered, and Thérèse, with another imploring injunction to be prudent, re-fastened the door behind them.

The spot to which they had been conducted, was a small raised gallery in the convent chapel, furnished with a curtain, which effectually screened those behind it from observation. Ample leisure and opportunity were allowed for a scrutiny of the space beyond, which was now empty. The little gallery was raised on one side of what might almost be termed an apartment of about twenty feet square. It formed that part of the chapel appropriated to the altar. Immediately beneath the gallery was the communion table, now prepared, and richly decorated for the ceremony which was about to take place. To the left were two doors, by which the officiating priests, with their assistants, were accustomed to enter; and facing the gallery, a vast iron grating reached from the floor to the vaulted roof, the space beyond being wholly concealed from view, by the ample folds of a black serge

curtain. Félix had learned from his indiscreet cousin, and now communicated to De Clermont, the nature of the ceremony of which they were about to be unseen witnesses. It was appointed for the purpose of a nun's pronouncing the awful vow which was to seclude her for ever within those darksome walls. The desire of the Abbess that the circumstance should be carefully concealed, was no matter of surprise to the two young men, acquainted as they were with the restrictions laid on the rights and privileges of the church, since the year 1789. The Lady Abbess, in sanctioning an augmentation to the number of her sisterhood, ran the risk of incurring the displeasure of the new government and of hastening the downfall of the very establishment she was so desirous of supporting in all its pristine severity. To De Clermont, it was not, therefore, very surprising that she should have sought to enforce the secrecy, which was violated in the unexpected manner we have detailed above.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

“ Submissive, sad, and lowly was her look ;
A burning taper in her hand she bore,
And on her shoulders, carelessly confus’d,
With loose neglect, her lovely tresses hung ;
Upon her cheek a faintish blush was spread ;
Feeble she seem’d, and sorely smit with pain.

Jane Shore.

IN due course of time, the hour arrived when the ceremony should take place, and the officiating priests, in their gorgeous robes, having entered by the side doors of the chapel, proceeded to take their appointed station on the steps of the altar. From the nook in which they had ensconced themselves, De Clermont and his companion impatiently watched all the preliminary arrangements, till at last their eyes became rivetted on the iron-grating, as the tall black curtain by which it was shaded was slowly withdrawn, and the long vaulted aisle beyond was thrown open to their view. It was empty ; but a few minutes only had elapsed, when the whole sisterhood appeared at

the further end, clad in the full habit of their Order, each nun bearing a missal on which her eyes were devoutly fixed. Chaunting the monotonous dirge-like sounds appropriated for the occasion, they advanced with slow and solemn steps, and ranged themselves along either side of the building, leaving the mid space void for the reception of the novice and her attendants.

It will be believed, that neither to these, nor to any part of the religious ceremonial, did the two unseen intruders give their attention. Their whole thoughts and looks were intently fixed, either on the far off entrances through which the sisterhood had passed, or were engaged in scanning the countenances of the pious sisters themselves, in the fond hope that Adèle might have been permitted to mingle with them, in order to be present at so sacred and novel a spectacle.

But it was in vain that her lover and her foster-brother fixed their eager gaze successively on each set of features that reposed in assumed, or acquired stillness beneath the nun's coif—It was in vain, that again and again they renewed the retrospection. In none could they trace the exquisite features and angelic expression of Adèle de St. Croix; and at last, in bitter disappointment, they relinquished the task as hopeless. They still, however, indulged the belief that an addition might yet be made to the numbers of those already present; and, accordingly, their whole attention became fixed on the doors of entrance at

the further end of the aisle, unheeding of aught that was passing before them. So wholly, indeed, were their thoughts absorbed, that they never cast one look upon the active portion of the scene, which, to a less pre-occupied observer, would have formed a spectacle of intense interest.

Meanwhile, the mournful ceremony proceeded, while the funereal chaunt of the nuns ascended in monotonous echoes to the vaulted roof of the chapel, now swelling—now dying on the ear, like the ebb and flow of the summer sea, in its continuous and unvaried cadence. The novice, with her attendants, occupied the middle of the aisle. Her robes of pure white were made, as is usual on such occasions, after the rich fashion of that world whose vanities she was about to abjure for ever. A wreath of roses bound the hair which was soon to be removed to give place to the close cap of a Nun of the Order of St. Ursula; but the tresses and the features of the novice were even now partially shaded by the long white veil which depended from her head to her feet.

The Lady Abbess herself, with her stern features and commanding figure, took the principal part in the ceremony, the mournful appearance of which was slightly relieved by a group of children, robed in white—their heads encircled with roses, whose occupation consisted in strewing with flowers the footsteps of the future bride of Heaven!

The opening parts of the ceremony were now over, and the united voices of the sisterhood for a moment

ceased. Their echo had scarce died away, when the chaunt was answered by a single voice, low and tremulous, but whose dulcet sweetness vibrated to the very heart of Alphonse De Clermont. He grasped his companion's arm, and listened in breathless attention. But the sound had ceased. Again the dirge-like chorus sent forth its prolonged and solemn notes—again it died away, and once more the same sweet, clear, and well-known voice responded.

"It is, it is, the voice of Adèle!" exclaimed De Clermont, in a scarcely audible whisper. "Look, Félix; look again—she must be among the sisterhood, and have escaped our observation."

And both re-commenced their scrutiny; but it proved as unsuccessful as before.

"By Heaven, I *will* be satisfied!" exclaimed De Clermont, attempting to rise; but his companion, with an iron grasp, detained him.

"Are you mad," exclaimed Félix; "to risk certain discovery, and certain failure. Besides, we are locked in, and must await my cousin's return. I tell you, I have other means for the liberation of Adèle, having once discovered her retreat, which to me, is still very doubtful; but your imprudence may mar all."

He had no time to say more, for the chaunt which had enabled him to speak unheard, save by De Clermont, had ceased again—but this time it was unanswered.

Alphonse perceived that his companion was right.

By a strong effort he mastered his impatience, and all his attention became once more fixed on his eager but still unsuccessful search.

The holy office had now advanced to that portion of it immediately preceding the final act, in which the novice was to pronounce her vows. An appropriate discourse would then be addressed to her by one of the officiating priests, setting forth the pains and perils of the worldly life which she had abjured, and the blessedness of that which she had chosen. The professed nun would then retire into her cloister, —and the world would have closed on her for ever !

According to the usual custom, the Abbess, with an attendant sister, now prepared to lead the novice forward to the iron-grating, on the other side of which the priest had placed himself, in order to put the questions to her who was about to be professed. These are, in most cases, a mere ceremonial; the enquiry as to whether the sister, in assuming the habit of a nun, is acting by her own choice, and of her own free will, being, as a matter of course, answered in the affirmative. With faltering steps, the novice advanced forward, the Lady Abbess and her attendant having placed themselves one on either side. As she stood with downcast eyes, behind the iron-grating, she folded her hands on her bosom, and drew her veil more closely round her, as though she would have shaded her features even from the gaze of him by whom she was about to be addressed. The priest put the accustomed

interrogatory. There was a moment's silence, during which he awaited the expected reply of the novice. At length, she raised her eyes and spoke.

"Holy Father," she began—

"Adèle, Adèle!" exclaimed De Clermont, in uncontrollable emotion,—but the next moment, Félix had laid one hand upon his lips, while with the other he forcibly retained him in his seat.

It was, indeed, his betrothed bride—his beloved Adèle, who was about to pronounce the irrevocable vow which must for ever seal their separation. Fool that he had been, to have thus sat for hours, his aching gaze bent on every countenance but hers! Wretch that he was, that his eyes should first rest on those beloved features at the moment when they were about to be hidden from him for ever! As these thoughts darted with agonizing swiftness through his brain, he struggled to free himself from the grasp of Félix.

"Madman! would you by your folly lose her for ever?" whispered the peasant, at the same time relaxing his hold. In an instant, De Clermont was calm—A single minute had recalled to him the futility of present resistance. He now sat motionless; his eyes earnestly strained upon the scene before him. Whether the words he had uttered had been heard by any of those engaged in the ceremony, it was difficult to determine. Possibly, their every sense was so absorbed in the business of the moment, that they had no ears for aught beside; or, perhaps,

in the full security of secrecy, the sounds had, indeed, been indistinctly heard, but were attributed to any cause but the real.

Not so with Adèle. The words had penetrated to the very depths of her heart. She knew the voice. It was the voice of Alphonse ; though she was unable to divine from whence it proceeded. It had caused her to pause in her answer to the question of the priest. It had brought back a momentary gleam to her eye, and a fleeting colour to her cheek ; but both had faded as she now gently put back the veil which had hitherto concealed her features. With what agonized feelings did De Clermont once more gaze in impassioned tenderness on the countenance of his betrothed ! In the attenuated form before him—in the hollow and faded cheek, and the sunken eye, scarcely could he recognise the beloved being whom he had seen but a few short months previously, blooming in all the perfection of womanly loveliness. Her features were still as ever perfect. Their expression was, perhaps, more beautiful than ever. And yet could that be Adèle—*his* Adèle, on whom he now looked ! Again she spoke, and the voice convinced him—for where was the tone that could match its sweetness !

“ Holy Father,” she said ; “ you ask of me whether, in approaching God’s holy altar, I am prepared to offer up the sacrifice of a free and willing heart : whether I am ready voluntarily to pronounce the solemn vow which must for ever seclude me within

these walls, here to devote every act, and thought, and word to the service of my God! How can I approach His footstool, with the words of deceit and falsehood on my lips? How can I dare become a member of this pious sisterhood, while my heart is yearning for those earthly ties to which it is indissolubly bound? Here, then, at the foot of His holy altar—here in the presence of His appointed ministers, do I solemnly protest against the violence which has constrained me to pass through the weary months of my noviciate, and which now requires me to consummate the sacrifice, by kneeling before His throne in wilful and deliberate perjury!”

Gradually, as Adèle proceeded, her countenance became lighted up with animation. Her cheek resumed its hue of health and beauty; and her eye beamed with an unwonted brilliancy. The priest stood as if struck dumb by the unusual answer returned to his inquiry, and the sisters simultaneously raised their eyes from the missals before them. The Abbess, alone, stood stern and unmoved, by the side of her helpless victim. She uttered a few words, unheard save by Adèle herself; but the import of which was sufficiently apparent from the severe admonitory aspect and manner of her by whom they were spoken. But on Adèle they failed to produce the effect which might have been expected. Her decision was taken. She had forewarned the Abbess that it was unalterable. She now gently, but firmly reminded her that she had done so—that

the present scene might have been avoided ; but that any attempt to enforce the conclusion of the ceremony was utterly useless. Had the Abbess been aware of the presence of the two unseen intruders in the chapel, she had not permitted even the few words to which Adèle had given utterance. Neither, in any case, would she have listened to them, but that her interest was deeply engaged in enforcing the obedience of her victim. Every hope of attaining so desirable an object had now, however, vanished. This was neither the time nor the place for further expostulation. The Abbess drew back a few paces, accompanied by the unfortunate novice and her attendant. In another minute, the black serge curtain had returned to its original position behind the iron-grating—the retreating sound of slow and solemn footsteps gradually died away, and silence once more reigned throughout the little chapel.

The feelings with which De Clermont and his companion had witnessed the extraordinary scene we have detailed above, may be imagined, but they cannot be described. From the calmness of despair, De Clermont, while his betrothed was speaking, gradually passed to the delicious and hopeful certainty, that Adèle might yet be his. He could only hope to win her, indeed, through toil and difficulty ; but was not the rich treasure of her affection an ample recompense, and would she not be dearer—far dearer to him than ever ! The idea of any half measures to procure her liberation he now spurned with

indignation ; for the awful change which a few months had wrought in her appearance, told but too truly the tale of hardship and suffering to which the severity of her stern guardians had condemned her. As for Félix, he was all rage and resentment at the treatment his unfortunate foster-sister had evidently experienced, and all impatience to revenge it.

But the two young men were unable to give vent in words to the various emotions by which they were agitated ; for the officiating priests were still in the little chapel, and in profound silence, immediately beyond the gallery in which they were placed. When a considerable time had elapsed, he who had addressed Adèle, dismissed his companions, and remained himself alone. Another brief space passed by, during which Félix became so impatient to make his escape, that De Clermont, in his turn, was obliged to motion to him the necessity for caution. Presently, however, their attention was aroused by perceiving the sable curtain once more gently drawn aside, and the tall figure of the Lady Abbess presented itself before them. Her features still wore their accustomed cast of rigid, marble severity ; but a nice observer might, perhaps, have discovered, that its expression was even heightened, and that a tone of resentment was now mingled with the sense of offended dignity which had been called forth by such unexampled resistance to her commands.

In the dialogue which ensued between herself and the priest, and which was avowedly for the purpose

of consulting him as to the best measures to be adopted towards her refractory subject, her tone and manner were rather those of a superior issuing her mandates, than of one come to solicit the counsel and support of an equal. Her words were accompanied by sundry foldings of the hands, and raising of the eyes towards Heaven; of pious ejaculations of horror at the wickedness which had been committed beneath her roof; and of prayers to the Almighty, that He would not visit upon the holy sisterhood the sins of this daughter of the evil one. That her corrupt and evil heart should still cling to the forbidden pleasures of a sinful world, was a crime of the deepest dye. That she should have dared to desecrate the holy sanctuary with the utterance of her unhallowed desires, proved that she was a reprobate and a castaway; and to permit the pollution of her presence longer beneath the consecrated roof which contained those pious sisters, whose lives were dedicated to the service of their Maker, would be but to call down the vengeance of Heaven upon the innocent.

We will not pursue the effusion called forth by the enthusiasm of the zealous Abbess. Much more she uttered to the same effect, to which her companion lent a respectful and attentive ear. Resolved as she was, that Adèle should not witness the rising of another sun beneath the roof she had so profaned, it was at last agreed, that when the night had fallen, the priest should himself return to the convent to take charge of the refractory novice,

for whom he engaged to provide a temporary asylum in the cottage of a relation of his own, which was situated at a little distance from the town, on the banks of the Lianne. The result of the morning's ceremony could, without delay, be communicated to the father of Adèle, who might then act towards her as he thought proper. These arrangements concluded, the pious Abbess withdrew. The iron-grating became once more shaded by the long black folds behind, and the priest passing forth by the side door of the chapel, no trace remained of the singular occurrences of which it had so lately been the scene.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

"I know what 'tis
When worldly knaves step in with silver beards,
To poison bliss, and pluck young souls asunder."

Mountaineers.

It will be necessary briefly to retrace our steps, for a few months, in order to comprehend the singular resolution which a cruel necessity had imposed on the unfortunate Heiress of Audenach. When the Deputy St. Croix returned to Paris from his unsuccessful expedition to Boulogne, his whole time and thoughts became absorbed in the political affairs of the day; in schemes for his own aggrandizement, and in endeavours to promote it.

But, instead of the realization of his dreams, which his new appointment had seemed to promise, it appeared that the road to power had become more rugged and difficult than ever. He had reckoned on the support of his nephew, D'Orville, but that worthy scion of the revolutionary tree had ceased to take any interest in his uncle's affairs, from the

moment that his own advantage no longer prompted him to such a course. Gifted himself with brilliant talents and daring courage, the young Jacobin would have spurned an association with a being so despicable as his uncle. Craft, selfishness, and ambition were the leading features of the Baron's character. To attain his ends, he would have enforced any sacrifice, save one, that might militate against his own interest or gratification. He was ready to mount the ladder of liberty, but to plant and sustain it for his ascent must rest with a less timid hand. The Deputy was admirably calculated to become a tool in the hands of his more daring nephew, for the advancement of his own purposes, or those of his patron, Robespierre; but in all the qualities which might have fitted him for assuming a prominent part in public affairs he was totally deficient.

With the acuteness of persons of a similar temperament, he perceived the unlooked-for nonentity of his position, and with the vanity inseparable from weak minds, he attributed the calamity to a wilful neglect of his superior talents. His resentment led him to trace the cause of so unaccountable an omission. His nephew was the first object towards whom his anger was directed; but it was neither his interest nor his inclination that his displeasure should rest there. In a very short time, the whole weight of his resentment transferred itself to his unfortunate daughter, whom he now considered as the primary cause of all his disappointment. Henceforth, the

only feeling he entertained towards her was one of rancorous animosity. He was determined at once to rid himself of any further trouble on her account; and at the same time to requite her offence, by effectually preventing the fulfilment of her engagement with De Clermont. He communicated his wishes to this effect to the Lady Abbess of the Ursuline Convent, accompanied by an injunction to enforce them by every means in her power. In what manner the cold-hearted mistaken devotee fulfilled the trust committed to her, the broken health and wasted form of her unhappy victim but too plainly indicated. Adèle became subjected to a series of penances and mortifications, of which, ere long, her life would probably have been the sacrifice; and to these was added the additional penalty of almost constant solitude, for her frequent communion with the sisterhood was deemed too dangerous a privilege to be often permitted. Neither from her brief moments of intercourse with them could she derive even a passing gratification; for, acquainted as they were with her supposed delinquency, the sisters dared not incur the displeasure of their dreaded Superior, by appearing to seek the society of an offender against her will.

To the astonishment and indignation of the Abbess, however, the resolution of her victim seemed but to gather strength from every additional punishment inflicted on her. During her hours of solitude, she believed that the recluse would be induced, from very

weariness of spirit, to yield up the contest, which she could not but be convinced was now utterly hopeless. But the Abbess was mistaken. It was to those very hours of solitude that Adèle looked for the only solace and support which her present forlorn situation afforded. Then it was, that in the loneliness of her narrow cell, she would cast herself beside the straw pallet which served as her place of unrest, and, pouring forth the full tide of her sorrow, she would offer up her humble petitions to that Heavenly tribunal, whence only she could hope for mercy or consolation. Hence, her lonely cell became to her as a place of refuge from the snares by which she was surrounded. It was the cherished asylum, where, only, in the fullness of her heart, she could unburthen the griefs which oppressed it—where she could offer up the incense of her innocent orisons to Heaven, and could find the only consolation that could not be taken from her.

It was thus that Adèle sought to diminish the poignancy of her sufferings—it was thus that she acquired sufficient strength to meet the appointed trial with fortitude and resignation. She conformed with cheerfulness to the regulations of the convent—she submitted, with patient meekness, to whatever mortification the severity of the Lady Abbess thought fitting to exact. Only on one subject, which was made the never-ending ground-work of admonition and reproof, did she still reserve to herself the privilege of free choice.

But even this was soon to be torn from her. More than ten months had passed by since the commencement of Adèle's weary captivity, when the Abbess one day sent to desire her presence. She obeyed, in the expectation that some fresh reproof, or additional chastisement awaited her; but she was little prepared for the intelligence about to be communicated.

Her father, willing to rid himself of so troublesome and useless an appendage as his refractory daughter, had transmitted his express commands that the period of her noviciate should be cut short, and that she should, without delay, pronounce the final vows that would seclude her an inmate of the convent for life. So unexpected, so awful was the demand made on her obedience, that for some minutes Adèle stood in speechless amazement, heedless of the admonitory conclusion to the address of the Abbess. "The period of her noviciate! What could those strange words mean?" Had, then, the weary months of her captivity been, indeed, but preparatory to the final act now required of her? True, she had adopted the costume of a novice, but she had done so, rather in courtesy to the wishes of the Abbess, than in obedience to her commands. True, she had performed all the painful duties which the severity of her guardian had imposed; but the idea of this final sacrifice—this cruel immolation, had never once occurred to her.

Instead of listening to the long exordium which the Abbess thought proper to deliver on the occasion,

Adèle's thoughts were occupied in framing a reply to the opening part of her discourse. But the only answer she was prepared to give, was little calculated to meet a favourable reception from her to whom it was addressed. The same motives which had prompted her refusal of the union with her cousin, equally influenced her decision on the present occasion. Neither by threats nor arguments, could Adèle be persuaded to consent to the sacrifice required of her. She communicated her resolution to the Abbess—she forewarned her that it was unalterable—she conjured her harsh monitress to pause in the course she was pursuing. But her words might, with equal effect, have been addressed to the stone walls by which she was surrounded. The Abbess, accustomed to implicit obedience, believed that Adèle would not dare persist in her resistance, worn down as she was, too, both in mind and body, by long and cruel suffering. She appointed the day for the fatal ceremony, without condescending to do more than notify her pleasure to the novice, who, perceiving that further remonstrance was useless, permitted herself, in silence, to be robed for the occasion. In what manner the ceremony terminated, and what were its probable results to her who had borne the principal part in it, we have already seen. It will be necessary, however, in order to account for the singular resolution adopted by the Lady Abbess, briefly to unveil the secret motives by which it was dictated.

She was aware, that in the act of tyranny of which she had been guilty, she had rendered herself liable to the censure of a government, whose leading principle was the liberty of the subject, and which was very ill-disposed to show either respect or lenity to any member of the ecclesiastical profession. Dreading, lest by some unforeseen chance, her delinquency might have been made public, and apprehensive of the consequent measures which De Clermont's vengeance might induce him to adopt, she was desirous of banishing every trace of it, by removing Adèle from the convent without delay. Should she defer that step till the wishes of the Deputy St. Croix could be made known to her, she might involve herself in a further difficulty. He would, probably, desire that his daughter should still remain an inmate of the convent. She must either comply, or run the risk of incurring his displeasure by her refusal. Her pious zeal furnished her with a pretext for avoiding all these dangers; and while her real motives were carefully concealed, the Lady Abbess strove to persuade both herself and others that she was actuated only by the desire of preserving unalloyed the purity of the sisterhood of which she was Superior.

Meanwhile, De Clermont and his companion were equally impatient to emerge from the prison-house in which they were enclosed. But it was in vain that they sought to make their escape from the little gallery. The oaken door was carefully fastened

from without, and they found themselves obliged to await the return of the *portière*, whose imprudence had put them in possession of information so important.

With anxiety quickened by her fear, Thérèse, in the mean time, was watching for the exit of the priests engaged in the ceremony, ere she ventured to liberate the two unwelcome intruders. The delay consequent on the unforeseen termination to the ceremony, with which Thérèse was as yet unacquainted, had well nigh overwhelmed the poor sister with despair. All the horrors of discovery started up before her; and never did culprit endure, by anticipation, greater imaginary torments than those which now filled the terrified mind of the self-accusing Thérèse. She had, at last, the inexpressible relief of seeing all the officiating priests depart; and, hastening up the little staircase, with a trembling hand she once more applied the key to the oaken door. So impatient was she to dismiss those within, and so anxious were they to take advantage of their freedom, that scarce a minute had elapsed, ere the brief thanks were given and received; and De Clermont, with his companion, had safely passed the convent gate, and was hastily descending towards the Lower Town.

“Félix,” said the former, “you have acted a wise and prudent part, and have saved me from an evil which my own impatience would have entailed on me. Are you willing still to lend me your assistance

in liberating Adèle from the wretches to whom she has been entrusted?"

"Am I willing?" exclaimed the young man, fiercely, his resentment violently roused against the persecutors of his foster-sister. "Had you been absent, would I not have performed the office alone and unassisted?"

"From my soul, I believe you would, Félix," exclaimed De Clermont; "but for the happy chance which brought me hither to share it with you. Is it possible, then, that to-night you can accompany me to Paris?"

Félix hesitated. "If Adèle is to be the companion of your flight," said he. "Not otherwise."

"Adèle *shall* be the partner of my journey," said De Clermont. "Think you I would leave her here alone and unprotected. But you, Félix, must undertake to find us a suitable conveyance, and also to regulate other arrangements, for which I, as a stranger in Boulogne, am unfitted."

Félix readily undertook the task required of him. It was settled that he should hire a carriage to convey the travellers to Paris, and with him was to rest the choice of a driver, on whose discretion he could rely, De Clermont merely stipulating to advance whatever sums were requisite to ensure his fidelity and speed. The localities of the spot fixed on for their enterprize seemed admirably calculated for ensuring its success. The road to Paris, (as all the world knows,) overlooks the banks of the Lianne,

and was that by which, in all probability, the priest would convey his charge to her destination. It was agreed, therefore, that at nightfall, De Clermont should proceed in the carriage hired for his journey to that spot where the two roads branched off in different directions; while Félix, taking advantage of the darkness, and having previously stationed himself near the convent gate, there to await the exit of the priest and his fair companion, should follow closely in their track, so as to be ready to co-operate in the movement that was to follow. But we must postpone the further detail of their project, with the history of its success or failure, to another Chapter.

CHAPTER XXXV.

“ ‘She’s won! we are gone, over bank, bush, and scaur:
They’ll have fleet steeds that follow,’ quoth young Lochinvar.”

Scott’s Marmion.

IN these our more peaceful times, it may be difficult to comprehend how De Clermont and his companion could have indulged the hope of succeeding in their enterprise, when the scene of action lay on a well-frequented road, and in the immediate vicinity of a populous town. But at the period of the French Revolution, the organization of the police was widely different from what it is at present. The impunity it afforded to excesses of every kind, rendered it extremely improbable that the project of the two young men would be disturbed in the execution, and it was still less likely that any immediate notification would be made of the affair, since the Lady Abbess would naturally shrink from an investigation reflecting so much discredit on herself, and such probable danger to her community. As to any

subsequent measures which the Baron de St. Croix might adopt for the recovery of his daughter, De Clermont hoped, ere the intelligence could be transmitted to him, to have removed her beyond the reach of her cruel and unnatural parent.

Animated with these hopes, he parted from Félix; the peasant hastening to make the preparations required, while De Clermont turned his steps towards the Custom-house. A few hours only had elapsed since his previous application for admittance, for that brief space had sufficed for the various occurrences which have occupied so many pages in the recital. He was now so fortunate as to find the officers of the *Douane* at their post. In less than half an hour, the single portmanteau was examined, the passport was *viséd*, and De Clermont had regained the inn at which he purposed awaiting the return of evening. With what impatience he watched the lagging march of time, will be readily believed. Each minute was counted—each hour seemed interminable. At length, the setting of the sun proclaimed that the day was drawing to a close; twilight succeeded, and was, in its turn, followed by the welcome darkness of night. Scarcely had the moon arisen, when her light became suddenly obscured by black and drifting clouds; the genial warmth of the day gave place to the chill damps of an autumnal evening; a drizzling rain set in, and the wind, which had hitherto been hushed and still, now moaned and whistled in dismal cadence. But all these gloomy presages were joyfully hailed

by De Clermont, as highly favourable to the success of his enterprise ; and it was with eager confidence he sprang into the carriage which the care of Félix had provided. The driver proceeded at a brisk trot down the present Rue Royale, and from thence passed forth into the great Paris road. At the distance of about a mile from the town, the sudden stopping of the vehicle informed De Clermont that they had reached the spot agreed on ; and fortunate it was that the driver was so perfectly acquainted with its localities, for to *his* inexperienced eye, the landmarks by which it was indicated were wholly hidden amid the surrounding darkness.

Félix, meanwhile, had stationed himself near the gate of the Ursuline Convent, there to watch for the exit of his foster-sister and her attendant. Soon after nightfall, a vehicle stopped at a little distance, from which he observed that one person descended, who walked directly to the convent gate, and was, without parley, admitted.

“This must be Adèle’s conductor,” thought Félix; “and this her conveyance from the convent;” and he stepped softly forward to reconnoitre the vehicle which was in waiting. It was a small, covered, one-horse carriage, such as was common among the second-rate gentry of the day, and which served either for conveying the surplus produce of their lands to the market of Boulogne, or for excursions of pleasure. The little vehicle in question was well known to him. He had often noticed it on the

weekly market-day, with its store of eggs, poultry, and vegetables; and he rightly conjectured that it was the property of the honest housewife to whose cottage Adèle was about to be conducted.

Scarcely had Félix concluded his observations, when the convent gate again opened, and two persons made their appearance. They passed so close to him that he might have touched the mantle in which the female was enveloped. He could perceive that she trembled, and that she leaned on the arm of her companion as if in need of support. The boy who had been left in charge of the vehicle, and who was the son of its owner, now descended. He assisted the female to enter, the priest took his place by her side, and, while he held the reins, their attendant led the horse down the steep descent into the Lower Town.

“He will go safe enough, now,” said their conductor, when they had reached the foot of the declivity. “So I will do my mother’s errand; and, by running home across the fields, I shall be at the cottage as soon as you.”

The necessarily slow progress of the carriage had enabled Félix to follow so closely on its track, that he was almost beside the speaker as he notified his intention. He heard the remonstrance of the priest, and the answer of the peasant, that his beast was too sure-footed to stumble, and too wise to miss the road; and the next minute the renegade had made his escape in the opposite direction.

Félix now changed his position. He placed himself in advance of the little vehicle, the progress of which was now more than ever retarded by the timidity of the driver, increased, as it was, by the impenetrable darkness of the night. In truth, the poor priest began to reproach himself bitterly for the task he had undertaken. He was a simple-minded, easy man, always intending to act for the best, but sadly prone to miss the right path, from sheer lack of courage to pursue it. Thus, he had taken the oath to the new Constitution, in mortal fear of the edict against nonjuring priests: he had consented to infringe the regulations of the Government by performing the ceremony of Adèle's profession, in deference to the commands of my Lady Abbess; and, by so doing, had lent himself to an act of tyranny, against which all his better feelings revolted. In the same manner, her stern, commanding tone had exacted his acquiescence in the propriety of removing the contumacious novice from the convent, in the extraordinary and expeditious mode that we have described; and it had, moreover, awed him into undertaking the disagreeable office of her conductor. Thus the poor priest's life had been one unvarying, alternate course of sinning and repenting. The hour of penitence was now upon him, and certainly its suffering was fully adequate to the magnitude of his offence; but the completion of his punishment was yet to come.

Fearful of quickening his pace beyond a walk, yet

earnestly desiring to shorten the duration of his pilgrimage, the priest pursued his dark and dismal course, now urging, now checking, the steps of the steed he was driving. But such a mode of proceeding was not long to be endured. Dismounting from his seat, he placed himself at the head of the animal, and, walking by its side, continued to lead it onwards at a more even pace. In this manner he approached the turn in the road, which was to conduct him to the present haven of his wishes. Alas! good man, little did'st thou dream of the contrary fate that awaited thee. Scarcely had he reached the well-known spot, when he found himself suddenly clasped round the waist from behind, and his arms pinioned to his side with Herculean force, while the unseen hands, which were firmly clenched before him, had, at the same time, wrenched the bridle from his own, and arrested the sluggish progress of the animal he was leading. It was in vain that the priest struggled to be free. Every effort served but to tighten the coil, which, like the fatal gripe of the boa-constrictor, had well nigh robbed him of respiration, while his terror had as nearly deprived him of the power of utterance. His first exclamation of surprise and horror was answered by a piercing shriek from his female companion.

“Adèle! my own Adèle! fear not,” exclaimed a voice which would have reassured her to whom it was addressed, but that she was no longer capable either of hearing or comprehending it. The hapless

girl was already insensible to aught that was passing around her. Weakened by long suffering, and worn out with the exertion and excitement incident to the ceremony of the morning, the shock had been too great for her shattered nerves. She had heard her name pronounced by the voice of her lover. She had just power to stretch forth her arms in the direction whence it proceeded, and the next moment she had fallen senseless on his bosom. De Clermont hastily bore his precious burden to the carriage which was in waiting, and gently placed her within. Then, springing in himself, the door was in a moment closed, and the driver had mounted. "*Allons, marche,*" he exclaimed, in a loud voice. With an instantaneous movement, Félix relaxed his hold on his terrified prisoner; with the rapidity of lightning he darted upon the carriage; the driver put his horses to their speed, and the travellers were already some distance from Boulogne, ere the priest had sufficiently collected his senses to be able to call for assistance. The whole affair had occupied no more than a few minutes, so perfect had been its success.

In what manner the unfortunate priest contrived to grope his way to the cottage of his relation, or whether the cruel alarm to which he had been subjected was productive of any very serious consequences, we are unable to state. Neither are we aware whether the Lady Abbess of the Ursuline Convent incurred either censure or persecution by the measure which her piety had induced her to

adopt towards an offender too sinful to remain longer under her roof; or whether she continued to live on in the odour of sanctity, the terror of her own community, and the admiration of others. As history makes no mention of any of these particulars, we rather incline to the latter opinion; and the more readily, since the Convent of the Ursuline Nuns (possibly out of respect to the memory of its pious Abbess,) has been permitted, unlike many of its less fortunate cotemporaries, to remain, even to the present day, in as flourishing a condition as ever.

When Adèle recovered from the swoon into which she had fallen, her first sensation was one of vague but excessive terror. She found herself travelling, at a rapid rate, through the darkness of the night, without being able distinctly to remember who it was that was gently supporting and endeavouring to restore her to animation. At first, she could only perceive that his manner was one of kindness. Then, amid the rattling of the wheels, and the pattering of the rain against the windows, she could distinguish that his words were spoken in a tone familiar to her ear; and at last, as the full tide of sense returned, she became conscious that the voice was that of her lover, and, pronouncing his name, she burst into a flood of tears.

How welcome was the scarce audible sound of that voice to him, who now strove, with a thousand expressions of tenderness and encouragement, to soothe the agitation of his trembling companion. Supporting

her in his arms, De Clermont endeavoured, in the best manner he was able, to mitigate the roughness of their necessarily rapid passage; but, with all his care, Adèle seemed scarce able to endure the jolts and concussions which at every moment shook their crazy vehicle.

“Will you rest a few hours, love?” said De Clermont, as, entering the little town of ———, he perceived that she was almost fainting in his arms.

“Oh! no, no!” she exclaimed, clinging to her lover, as if she would mutely have expressed her terror at the very thought of being pursued and overtaken. They accordingly continued their journey with as much speed as the mode of travelling in those days, and the inconvenience of the hour, would permit; and here again the alacrity of Félix was found of the most essential service.

On the evening succeeding that of their departure from Boulogne, they were still at some distance from the capital; but Adèle was now so completely overpowered by fatigue, that a few hours repose had become absolutely necessary. Feverish, but unbroken were the slumbers, which, for the first time, visited her eyelids, while De Clermont and Félix kept watch throughout the night in an adjoining apartment. But nothing occurred to awaken any apprehension of pursuit; and, on the following morning, Adèle was sufficiently refreshed to be able to re-commence her journey.

It was evening when the distant spires of the

capital became visible, and the darkness was fast closing, as she found herself once more approaching the abode of the beloved friend of her childhood, for it was to the mansion of Madame de Beaumont that their course was directed. Here, De Clermont would find a safe and secret asylum for his betrothed, during the brief period that must elapse ere he could assume the privilege of calling himself her rightful protector; and here she would experience all the care and kindness which her shattered health demanded.

As Félix was desirous of seeking out the abode of Marie de Théricourt, (who had long since followed the steps of the Baron to Paris,) and of communicating to her the progress of late events, he took leave of the lovers, after receiving their grateful thanks, immediately on entering the city.

Both De Clermont and Adèle were silent, (for the feelings of the moment admitted not of utterance,) as, passing along the dimly-lighted streets, they at length reached the Quai, in the immediate vicinity of Madame de Beaumont's residence. Under other circumstances, the travellers could not but have been struck with the singular appearance of the usually bustling city of Paris; but the air of silence and desertion which reigned throughout, and the total absence of vehicles of every description, was nearly unheeded, so entirely were their thoughts absorbed in the joyful anticipation of the rest and welcome which awaited them.

They had now reached the well-known Porte Cochère: its ponderous knocker had been raised, and the little side door was opened, as if to reconnoitre those without; but, instead of the familiar countenance of the old porter hastening to fling the gates wide open for their entrance, a stranger passed forth, and, advancing towards the carriage, peered curiously into the faces of the two travellers. Unable to comprehend his motive, De Clermont, in a somewhat imperative tone, demanded the cause of his impertinent curiosity; but the stranger, without vouchsafing a reply, turned hastily back towards the Porte Cochère, and, opening that portion of it by which he had before passed forth, he beckoned to some person within. In another moment the carriage of the travellers was surrounded by a group of ill-looking men, some of them bearing lanterns, which they raised on high, in order to examine the features of De Clermont and his terrified companion.

“It is De Clermont!” said one.

“Seize him!” exclaimed another; and the whole group burst forth into expressions of joy, vengeance, or surprise. It was in vain that De Clermont, raising his voice to its utmost pitch, so as to be heard above the tumult, demanded by what authority he was thus assailed. It was in vain that, supporting Adèle with one arm, he endeavoured with the other to beat off the ruffians by whom he was surrounded. By main force they dragged him from the carriage, while his helpless companion was forced from him through

the opposite door; and, in spite of the most desperate resistance, De Clermont, overpowered by numbers, found himself, in less than a quarter of an hour, an inmate of the neighbouring prison of the Conciergerie.

With what feelings of agony he paced his narrow cell during that night of horrors, we will not attempt to describe. She—his betrothed—his adored Adèle! What might have been her fate? How unspeakable would have been the mitigation to his anguish, could he have known that at that very moment his beloved was beneath the same roof with himself—that she was, indeed, equally a prisoner—equally a prey to all the tortures with which he was racked; but that she was at least relieved from the presence of her captors—that she was left undisturbed to endure the full weight of her wretchedness, in the freedom of solitude.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

“ Blood, death, and deathful deeds, are in that noise,
Ruin, destruction at the utmost point.”

Samson Agonistes.

THAT darkest page in the eventful history of the period to which the thread of our narrative has conducted us, which, considering the briefness of its duration, was more fertile in crime and misery than any which has yet disgraced the French annals, ought, like the sanguinary laws of the Grecian legislator, to be written, not with ink, but with blood. Fain would we blot from the records of our tale the history of those days of horror—fain would we obliterate from the page of memory the blood-stained images of those, whose virtue could win for them no mercy—whose innocence could procure them no protection. But we must not anticipate.

In order to comprehend the events immediately connected with our tale, it will be necessary slightly to advert to those of a more public nature. France, at

the moment of which we are writing, was surrounded by foreign enemies, torn by internal factions, and menaced at the same time with the horrors both of foreign and civil war. The King's brothers, with a large body of emigrants, had sought in a strange land the safety which was denied them in their own. A law had, in consequence, been passed by the new government, commanding their immediate return to France, and awarding the penalty of death to their disobedience.

But instead of conforming to this harsh edict, the King's brothers, with their adherents, exerted all their energies in procuring the assistance of foreign powers, to enable them to re-enter France at the head of a powerful army, so as to be in a condition to assert their own rights, and to free the King from the thralldom in which he was held. At last, the Emperor of Austria and the King of Prussia, were induced to commence hostilities. In concert with the royalists, they entered the French territory, took Longwy, and advanced upon Verdun.

These successes were made the pretext for a series of atrocious and deliberate villanies, perpetrated in the French capital, which in the annals of civilized nations are without a parallel. It was asserted, that the emigrants beyond the frontiers were in correspondence with numerous emissaries at Paris, who waited only for a favourable moment to rise in open rebellion against the new government of regenerated France. Domiciliary visits were, in

consequence, commanded to be made to the houses of all those persons who were either obnoxious to the Jacobin faction, or suspected of the crime of being royalists. Consternation and terror reigned throughout the city of Paris, for innocence was no defence against the vindictiveness of private or political resentment. The dead hour of the night was chosen for the visits of the ferocious inquisitors, who, making good their entrance into every abode marked out by the wanton or premeditated villany of their employers, seized whatever papers they could find, and regardless of age, sex, or station, hurried the terrified inmates to the nearest prison.

It was, then, a band of these ruffians who were eagerly engaged in the search of Madame de Beaumont's mansion, at the unfortunate moment when De Clermont reached it in total ignorance of the passing state of affairs. His aunt was well known to be personally attached to the Queen. She was, therefore, not likely to be overlooked in the general scrutiny. The commissioners were, in fact, engaged in ransacking her house at the moment of her nephew's arrival, having previously conveyed its ill-fated proprietor a prisoner to the Conciergerie. Their being able, at the same time, to capture so rich a prize as the well-known and hated Count de Clermont, was an unexpected source of triumphant joy. As for Adèle—it was a sufficient crime to have been the companion of his journey. Unmindful of her distress, and heedless of the common courtesies

which her age and sex might have demanded, her ruthless captors hurried her onwards to the Conciergerie, and having consigned their prisoners separately to the charge of a merciless gaoler, departed to prosecute their odious and ill-omened avocation elsewhere.

In this manner the prisons of Paris became, in the short space of a few days, crowded with persons of all ranks and of all ages. Prelates, respected for their piety—nobles, distinguished by their rank—the young and the beautiful—the old and the decrepid—the rich and the poor—the virtuous and the evil-minded of both sexes, were all confusedly huddled together. But this was only the first act of the awful tragedy that was to follow. It had been observed that for a considerable time, bands of men of a ferocious aspect, for whose presence there was no visible cause, and with whose means of existence none were acquainted, had infested the capital. The mystery was about to be fatally solved. To these hired and paid assassins—the notorious Marsellois—was entrusted the organised and indiscriminate massacre of the unfortunate royalist prisoners! This, then, was to be their occupation! This, the horrible object for which their presence had been tolerated!

The report was now industriously circulated, that the royalists who were still at liberty had formed a plot to burst open the prisons; to release their partisans, and to rise *en masse*. Suddenly the tocsin sounded, and the fearful cry re-echoed from one end of Paris to the other. “To the prisons, to the

prisons. Let us exterminate the enemies of the nation, let us rid the soil of France of their presence."

The infuriate rabble, unchecked by one effort of the municipal authorities, and urged on by the blood-thirsty leaders of the democratical factions, rushed to the various asylums of their helpless victims. The heart sickens at the horrible scene of butchery that ensued. A certain number of the murderous Marsellois, armed for their bloody task with various instruments of destruction, placed themselves immediately before the entrance of each prison, their upraised weapons ready to inflict the hideous penalty, as each wretched victim was brought unresistingly forth amid the yells, shouts, and imprecations of the surrounding multitude. Within the prisons, a self-constituted tribunal, composed in a great measure of the lowest of the demagogues, had placed themselves at a table covered with arms, papers, bottles, pipes and glasses—many of them drunk with wine, and all intoxicated with triumphant fury. A few moments only, were all that could be allowed to the trial, condemnation, and punishment of each unhappy victim. Hurried from the presence of his judges, he was thrust forth, in unconscious innocence, into the very jaws of destruction, the words "*à l' Abbaye*,"*

* On this fatal occasion the words "*à l' Abbaye*," notified that the prisoner was condemned—those of "*à Coblenz*," that he was acquitted. But the number of those who were so happy as to receive the latter sentence was lamentably small indeed: nearly the whole of the unfortunate prisoners perished!

were uttered, and ere the prisoner had time to comprehend their meaning, the fatal blow had descended—his quivering body was cast upon the gory heap, which bore bloody testimony to the activity of the murderers, and another victim had already appeared to swell the hideous catalogue of crime! Such were the scenes in which the noble Count de Clermont, and the virtuous and beautiful Adèle de St. Croix, were destined to bear a part!

We have already adverted to the feelings of agony with which they had each passed the night; but as morning dawned, and they were still left undisturbed, (though not in solitude, for the increased number of prisoners rendered such an indulgence impossible,) the daylight brought some mitigation to the sufferings of each. It was towards three o'clock in the afternoon of the 2nd of September, that the sounds of the horrible tumult we have attempted to describe above, burst upon their ears. The shrieks, the yells, the imprecations without; the confusion, and the hurrying to and fro within the prison, all combined to impress them with the dread of some fearful calamity, but of what nature, they were far, very far from conceiving.

It was already evening, when the door of Adèle's cell was flung open, and she, with the trembling companions who had been thrust in to share her place of captivity, was hurried along the stone passages to undergo their brief, but merciless examination. One—two—three of the little group, had already passed

before the judgment seat. Thrice had the condemnatory words, "*Qu'on elargisse Madame !*" been pronounced ; and thrice, as the little wicket gate of the prison had been unclosed for the exit of her to whom they were addressed, had the air been rent with a wild and piercing shriek, whose sound was lost amid the demon shouts of the multitude !

It was now Adèle's turn. Worn almost to inanition by the bodily fatigue and mental excitement of the last few days, she stood pale, silent, and motionless, till the men, by whom she had been conducted, dragged her hastily forward, and placed her in the spot just occupied by her unfortunate companions. The intoxicated judge proceeded to put the usual questions ; but Adèle seemed not to comprehend the meaning of the words addressed to her.

"Speak, woman ;" roared her brutal inquisitor, in a voice of thunder. Still she answered only by raising her eyes vacantly from the ground. As she did so, they fixed themselves for a moment with an almost phrenzied glare of recognition, upon a figure which was planted exactly opposite to her, and the next instant, with a piercing shriek, she had fallen senseless to the ground.

Her cousin, D'Orville, the dreaded cause of all her sufferings, stood before her in the full plenitude of power, and not only was she exposed once more defenceless to his vengeance, but her lover—her Alphonse !—sense forsook her, ere she could pursue the agonizing train of thought.

But it was to this very dreaded circumstance that Adèle was indebted for her exemption from the horrible death which awaited her. A single word from the all-powerful Jacobin sufficed to procure for him permission to bear his cousin from the hideous scene. He was too well known both to the executioners and to the rabble to meet with any obstruction to his progress. Words of jocular and friendly greeting were alone bestowed upon the popular leader as he passed along, and without difficulty he was enabled to bear Adèle through the shouting multitude, as he made his way towards the dwelling of her father. Whether in saving her from destruction, D'Orville was influenced by any spark of kindly feeling, or whether he was desirous of revenging his cousin's indifference in a more torturing and lingering manner, it would be difficult to decide. Whether, also, his project, either for good or evil, were likely to be fulfilled, we shall presently discover. It will be remembered that Félix Noel had taken his leave of the travellers immediately on entering Paris, and fortunate it was for himself that he had done so, for his companionship with them would inevitably have entailed on him a similar fate to theirs. From Marie de Théricourt, he heard a detailed account of public affairs, and his enquiries, on the following day, at the Hotel Beaumont, led to the horrible conclusion, that his unfortunate foster-sister and her lover, would probably be involved in the general destruction. Judging from the vicinity of the prison of the Conciergerie,

that it was to that abode of misery they had been consigned, with steps winged by fear, and hastened by the encrescasing uproar, which grew louder and louder as he approached it, Félix hurried towards the horrid scene, in the almost despairing hope of succouring his unfortunate companions. Already was he within sight of the building—already was he struggling to make good his passage through the dense crowd by which its entrance was blocked up, when the well-known face of D'Orville presented itself to his eyes. As the crowd drew back to afford a momentary passage to their favourite leader, Félix darted forward in the hope of procuring his interference in behalf of his foster-sister. What, then, was his joy at perceiving, in the senseless burden with which D'Orville's passage was retarded, the form and features of her for whom all his worst fears had been awakened. With an acuteness of perception, and a quickness of decision for which he was remarkable, Félix penetrated the intention of the Jacobin, and determined to frustrate it.

"Shall I relieve you of your burden, Monsieur?" said he to D'Orville, to whom his person was well known, as a domestic in the household at Audenach.

"Truly, we are well met, Félix," said the Jacobin; "for I am somewhat weary of my load, and have, besides, affairs of moment that call me in an opposite direction. Take charge, then, of your master's daughter; and bear her to his house, where, doubtless, you will find the worthy Deputy himself. In

what manner she became an inmate yonder, *he*, perhaps, can tell better than I." And, with a sneer, D'Orville turned off, without waiting for a reply.

No sooner was he out of sight, than Félix, exerting the utmost speed he could command, hastened onwards with the precious burden entrusted to him, while the horrible sounds which still rung in his ears, even while they became each moment fainter and more faint, suggested to his terrified imagination the possibility of pursuit, and lent him fresh energy in the task to which his affection for his foster-sister had prompted him. Instead of bearing Adèle to the neighbouring abode of her father, (by doing which he was aware he should at once restore her to the power of her persecutors,) he dragged on his long and weary course to an asylum in an obscure and narrow street—bereft, indeed, of the comforts which the state of Adèle required, but where, at least, she would be secure in secrecy and freedom. Here, then, in the wretched apartment which Marie de Théricourt had chosen for her resting-place, did Félix deposit his still senseless foster-sister; and, having consigned her to the care of a female on whose skill and kindness he believed he could rely, he hastened back to inform himself of the fate of her unfortunate lover.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

"O whither shall I run, or which way fly
The sight of this so horrid spectacle,
Which erst my eyes beheld and yet behold,
For dire imagination still pursues me."

Milton.

MEANWHILE, the work of death was proceeding, and De Clermont, from his place of captivity, could distinctly hear the mingled shrieks of agony and triumph, as they arose in frightful discord on the midnight air. The echoes of many voices, and the hurrying footsteps which had so often passed his cell, at length stopped beside it, and the harsh grating of the key in the lock, told him that the moment of his liberation was at hand. He hailed the sound as likely, at least, to unravel the horrid mystery by which he was surrounded; and with eager haste, De Clermont sprang forward at the summons of his gaoler, to follow with the devoted group who were already hurrying forward along the

dark stone corridor. His impatience seemed to afford a subject of much merriment to those by whom he was conducted.

"Here's one willing enough to make more sport;" said one of them, with a loud laugh.

"Fair and softly, my master," said another, applying the butt end of his musket with some violence to the prisoner, as De Clermont eagerly pressed forward, and sought to glean some information from those nearest to him.

"For the love of Heaven," said he, laying his hand upon the arm of the last speaker, "tell me the meaning of this tumult, and whither we are about to be conducted."

The person thus addressed suffered his progress to be for an instant arrested, as pausing beneath the single iron lamp, with whose sickly glare the long low stone passage was alone illumined, he examined the features of the prisoner. Then, hurrying him on, as if in the execution of his duty, he took advantage of the darkness, to draw closer, and applying his mouth to De Clermont's ear—"If you value life," said he, "answer with prudence. Make no resistance, or your destruction is inevitable."

"Not for myself," exclaimed De Clermont, in the same low tone to his mysterious conductor; "but for one"—there was no time for more, for the devoted group were already in presence of the diabolical conclave, and the atrocious looking Marselilos

to whom De Clermont had addressed himself, had hastened to assume the horrid duties of his post.

As the prisoners, in rapid succession, were thrust forward to undergo the almost momentary mockery of trial, the Marsellois stood by the side of each, as the awful fiat of condemnation or acquittal was pronounced; and retaining his station in front of the self-elected judges, he turned over each prisoner successively to receive the sentence awarded him.

The name of Alphonse de Clermont was now vociferated. Unable fully to comprehend the scene before him, yet conscious that some horrible tragedy was in preparation for himself and his unfortunate companions, the young royalist advanced with a firm step and an intrepid countenance to the table at which the criminal tribunal was seated. On this desecrated judgment-seat, which was placed immediately within the entrance to the prison, in order to afford the smallest possible interval between the sentence and its execution, papers, writing materials, swords, pistols, and various implements of destruction, lay confusedly mingled with pipes and bottles of exciting liquors, from which the already intoxicated judges continually refreshed themselves. The prisoner was allowed no time to give utterance to the words which had risen to his lips, for the simple name of De Clermont drew forth the instantaneous decision of his fate.

“Off with him; à l’*Abbaye*,” roared the ruffian

who was acting as President; and, who, standing with a cutlass in his hand, his face, hands and clothes covered with blood, seemed to think it unnecessary to put even the usual questions to so notorious an offender.

"In the name of outraged justice, I demand,—"
said De Clermont; but his voice was drowned beneath the oaths and execrations of his judges; in another instant, a fresh victim had filled his place; and he was himself dragged forward towards the wicket gate of the prison, there to receive his awarded doom. As it opened for his exit, the reeking axes of the assassins were swung on high in readiness to perform their bloody work, while the multitude paused in eager expectation of the delivery of the sentence.

"*A Coblentz !*" thundered out the voice of the Marsellois, who was himself one of De Clermont's conductors: "*à l'Abbaye,*" roared the ruffianly soldier on the other side; "he has reversed the sentence,—he would defraud the nation of her rights."

"*A l'Abbaye, à l'Abbaye,*" shouted the excited multitude, and the next moment the gory axe of the nearest assassin had descended from its upraised position with a furious velocity which would have annihilated its intended victim, but that the Marsellois, with an arm of iron, warded off the blow with the musket he carried.

"I tell you this man lies," he vociferated; "Is Martin Berthe the man to screen a royalist dog from

the vengeance of the nation? Down with your weapons, my masters, and keep them for *la Lamballe*, whose turn comes next. I will cry you no mercy for *her*."

Martin, for he it was that had addressed the multitude, had touched on a favourite chord. By one of those strange caprices which always influence the actions of a mob, the rabble, regardless of the victim before them, and in joyful anticipation of the expected and more welcome sacrifice, in an instant changed their cry—"à Coblentz, à Coblentz," now resounded through the midnight air; and Martin was permitted triumphantly to escort his prisoner through the opening ranks of the multitude, till he had delivered him safely into the hands of those entrusted with the charge of the acquitted. He had not, however, done so without considerable resistance on the part of De Clermont himself.

"I will not leave this spot," he exclaimed, as glancing on the pile of mutilated and palpitating corpses which were heaped against the gate of the prison, and observing the ground crimson with blood, he struggled to free himself from the grasp of his preserver. "I will not leave this spot till I have assured myself of *hers*—of Adèle de St. Croix's safety. Let me go, Martin, for I *will* return and seek *her*," he continued, with almost frantic violence, at the thought that Adèle was still in the den of horrors, from which he had been almost miraculously rescued.

"Have I not told you that she is already in safety,"

answered Martin, vehemently asserting what he believed to be a direct falsehood, in his dread of De Clermont's fruitlessly returning to throw away a life he had with so much difficulty preserved.

"As you hope for mercy," said De Clermont, tell me truly. "Is Mademoiselle de St. Croix beyond the reach of danger?"

"She is."

"Will you swear it?"

"I swear!" said the Marsellois impatiently, but without hesitation; and while he hastened back to resume the duties of his post, De Clermont, reassured by so solemn an assertion, permitted himself to be hurried from the fatal spot.

Félix Noel, in the meanwhile, had vainly sought to penetrate the misguided multitude, who, eager to glut their eyes with the destruction of the unfortunate royalists, had crowded round the entrance to the prison, save where one spot, immediately before the gate, was reserved for the assassins to perform, undisturbed, their work of blood. This was now slippery with gore, and encumbered with a pile of bleeding bodies, the numbers of which were every moment swelled, as a fresh victim was thrust forth to his murderers, and as the awful words, "*à l'Abbaye*," sealed his awful doom.

But Félix was unable to distinguish the interior of this scene of horrors. Hurrying away, therefore, he forced his passage through that portion of the crowd which was engaged in watching the less inte-

resting part of the night's proceedings. The actual massacre of the prisoners was the spectacle which all most eagerly sought to behold; and those only who were too late to obtain a place in the desired station, sought consolation for their disappointment by posting themselves in the passage of the few prisoners to whom the words, "*à Coblenz*," had been the signal of acquittal.

Amid the growls and hootings of the disappointed rabble, the small number of persons to whom life had been thus accorded, were conducted by a guard appointed for the purpose to a place of safety. It was in this manner that De Clermont was hurried through the crowd, which, a moment before, had been eagerly anticipating his destruction; and it was amid those who now fiercely glared on the aristocratic mien and bearing of the young royalist, with looks of disappointed hatred and revenge, that Félix had placed himself in the scarce admitted hope of desecrating the object of his anxiety.

"They will soon have slack work yonder," growled one of the mob; "for here is another let loose from the den."

"Hark!" said the person addressed; "they are busy enough, now." And, as he spoke, the exulting shout of "*à la Lamballe! à la Lamballe!*" rent the air, drowning the one wild, heart-piercing shriek by which it had been preceded.

Shuddering at the sounds which echoed round him—now conscious of the awful drama which was

acting—convinced that his single arm was powerless to stem the murderous torrent—and in the full belief that Adèle was indeed rescued from its horrors, De Clermont permitted himself to be dragged onwards to the place of refuge appointed for the innocent. Thither Félix followed, and, posting himself at the entrance, remained patiently awaiting the moment when De Clermont's exit would enable him to communicate the joyful intelligence of Adèle's safety, and the secret of her present asylum.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

“She was a thing too pure to be
Long fettered to mortality !
A lovely, fair, unsullied flower,
That droop’d beneath its first spring shower !”

E. R. R.

It was late on the following day that Adèle de St. Croix was seated in solitary meditation in the humble retreat to which her foster-brother had borne her. Her recovery from the state of insensibility into which the unexpected vision of the dreaded Chevalier D’Orville had thrown her, was followed by a succession of fainting fits which lasted for several hours; and it was only as morning dawned, that a sleeping potion, administered by the skilful hands of the aged female to whom Félix had consigned her, seemed likely to produce the desired effect on the worn-out frame and shattered nerves of the sufferer. The beams of the morning sun were already glancing through the single casement window of the little apartment, when Adèle fell into a profound sleep.

Her repose was still unbroken, as the evening shadows began to deepen over the devoted city of Paris ; and it was not till the darkness had closed around, that she awoke to a confused recollection of late events.

But even when sense had returned sufficiently to restore to her mind the ill-defined image of the last scene with which it was impressed, it was long ere Adèle was able rightly to comprehend the singular circumstances in which she found herself placed. The scantily furnished and dimly lighted apartment, the humble couch on which she was lying, and the strange attendant who stood beside her, were all incomprehensible to her benighted imagination ; for the composing draught, which for so many hours had lulled her to repose, still retained its benumbing influence over her first moments of waking. By degrees this deceitful calm was succeeded by a state of feverish excitement ; and as recovered memory brought back in rapid succession the painful images of the past, Adèle overwhelmed her attendant with a series of anxious enquiries, to which she vainly strove to obtain a satisfactory reply. Restless, miserable, and weary of her uneasy couch, she at length arose, and placing herself beside the few faggots which served the purpose of a fire, she sat in the listless, mournful silence of despair.

Taking advantage of the partial recovery of her charge, the old woman hastened to escape from the darkened monotony of the sick chamber, and hobbling down the narrow stairs was soon busily engaged

in making amends to herself for the tedious silence of the several preceding hours. So absorbed was Adèle in her own thoughts, that she scarce noticed the departure of her attendant. She sat motionless, her hands clasped, her eyes fixed on the ground, in the painful endeavour to unravel the tangled mystery in which her recollection of late events was still involved. She was thus engaged, when her attention was aroused by the sound of footsteps ascending the stair. As they approached nearer and nearer, Adèle listened with a beating heart. She perceived that she was utterly alone,—utterly beyond the reach of assistance; and with a sudden impulse of terror, she started from her seat and staggered towards the door, in the hope of finding some fastening with which to secure it. But ere she had time to effect her purpose, it was already opened; and by the dim flickering light of the smouldering wood fire, Adèle could just distinguish the figures of two men who had entered the apartment.

“Is she sleeping?” said the foremost in a low whisper, advancing towards the motionless figure before him; for Adèle, horror stricken at the unexpected intrusion, stood speechless and paralyzed. As the speaker laid his hand upon her arm in expectation of an answer to his question, Adèle shrunk beneath his touch, and the next moment, with a moan of suppressed agony, she sank senseless to the ground.

Félix Noel, (for he it was who, in the dim light,

had mistaken the figure of his foster-sister for that of the attendant in whose charge he had left her,) flew for further assistance; while De Clermont, having raised the insensible form of his beloved and placed her on the couch, strove, by every means he could devise, to recal her to animation. In a few minutes Félix had returned with the old attendant who had so ill fulfilled the precious trust reposed in her; but it was long before even her skill could restore Adèle to consciousness.

We have already adverted to the shattered state of health to which her long residence in the Ursuline Convent had reduced her. In conveying his betrothed to the peaceful home of her childhood, De Clermont had fondly anticipated the happiest results from the maternal care and unremitting kindness of Madame de Beaumont. Alas! how bitterly changed were his feelings and prospects now! The hardships and sufferings to which Adèle had been exposed, had awakened his worst fears on her account. More than ever she needed all those comforts of which her present wretched retreat was utterly bereft; yet, where was the asylum to which, with any hope of safety, he might venture to remove her? But in her present unmolested freedom from persecution, and, above all, in the society of her lover, Adèle found a more delicious source of enjoyment, than in all the luxuries his affection would have procured her.

It was absolutely necessary, for the safety of both,

that they should not venture beyond the precincts of their remote retreat; for discovery would have entailed on each almost certain destruction. In this extremity, an unexpected resource was happily found. Marie de Théricourt willingly consented to relinquish the tenantry of her humble abode for the use of the once heiress of Audenach; and with her assistance, and that of Félix, De Clermont was enabled to procure for Adèle as many comforts as could be conveyed thither without exciting dangerous suspicions of the concealed rank of the new comers. For himself, he very gladly accepted the offer of Félix Noel to share his apartment; which, by placing him beneath the same roof with Adèle, not only procured for her a double protection, but would also enable him, at a moment's notice, to co-operate with her foster-brother in any measure for her safety, which unforeseen circumstances might render necessary.

More than a fortnight had now passed by, and still the secluded place of refuge of De Clermont and his betrothed was undiscovered. With untiring affection did the young royalist seek, by every means he could devise, to mitigate the painful and peculiar situation in which Adèle was so unexpectedly placed. He sought to dispel her terror with words of tenderness and encouragement. He spoke to her of hope, and peace, and joy; and banishing from his discourse the too painful recollections of the past, he dwelt only on the hopeful anticipations of the future.

It was at moments like these, that De Clermont was wont to treasure up each word that she uttered, and to watch with almost breathless anxiety the ever changing hues of her beautiful countenance. It was thus, that as they sat together by their humble hearth, her hand clasped in his, while he marked the exquisite bloom which ever and anon mantled in her cheek,—while he noted the unwonted brilliancy of her eye, and the smile of seraph sweetness that seemed to thank him for his care ;—it was then that De Clermont abandoned himself to the delicious delusions of hope, nor permitted one dark cloud of doubt or fear to sully the bright visions his fancy had created.

Nor was it very surprising that he should have indulged a belief so consonant to his wishes, confirmed as it was by Adèle's reiterated assurances of returning health and strength. Alas ! how fragile was the ground-work upon which those assurances rested. The poor novice of the Ursuline Convent, revived by the words of kindness and affection which now poured their soothing balm over her wounded spirit, fondly trusted that the same cherished restorative could equally invigorate the enfeebled powers of her wasted frame. As each succeeding day she leaned on the arm of Alphonse for support, while with trembling footsteps she made the tour of her little chamber, she forgot, in the unhopèd-for happiness of the moment, the fatigue and pain which even so small an effort cost her ; she dreamed not that any

greater exertion would have been utterly beyond her now wasted strength.

"Do you not think, Alphonse," said she, as one day they made their accustomed round, "that we might now venture to inform dear Madame de Beaumont of our retreat?"

"Impossible, dearest!" answered Alphonse, by a strong effort repressing the groan of agony which almost choked his utterance. "Félix informs me she has left Paris."

Too truly had the excellent, the beloved friend of his own—of Adèle's childhood, been removed beyond the reach of both. She had fallen in the massacre of the royalists, on the fatal night of De Clermont's release from the dungeons of the Conciergerie, in which, at that very moment, his unfortunate aunt was a prisoner!

On this subject, and on all the circumstances which had led to their present peculiar situation, De Clermont had sometimes considerable difficulty in answering the interrogatories of Adèle. But he *did* succeed in quieting her apprehensions. He *did* succeed in preserving her in that blissful ignorance which he believed absolutely necessary for her restoration.

But, from his own mind, De Clermont was wholly unable to banish the frightful images of the horrors he had witnessed. Perpetually they rose up before him, mingled with the bitter recollection of having, for the first time, failed in the fulfilment of the

charge entrusted to him by the Queen ; and with no less bitter regrets at the worthlessness and inactivity in the royal cause, to which the momentary necessity for concealment now compelled him. His papers had been all torn from him on the night of his arrest. True, they were written in cipher ; and were, therefore, illegible to any but her to whom they were addressed. True, the precious documents, even had they been preserved, could not, by any possibility, have been conveyed to the Queen ; for the Royal Family were now themselves close prisoners in the Tower of the Temple, hemmed in by spies, whose lynx-eyed vigilance was ever on the alert. Yet still, in having permitted his affection for Adèle to interfere with the performance of his duty, De Clermont found ample subject for self-accusation. He was tortured, too, with the conviction, that in rescuing Adèle from her persecutors, he had but involved her in the still more fearful calamities of the hour ; and while to this was added the horrible certainty that her retreat might, at any moment, be discovered, he wearied himself in forming fruitless schemes for her future safety.

Trusting that some unlooked-for vicissitude in public affairs would enable him to remove his precious charge beyond the reach of danger, De Clermont eagerly listened to the intelligence which was daily procured for him, by the officious care of Marie de Théricourt and her confederate Félix.

But there was one measure which the young

royalist felt to be indispensable, ere he could again make Adèle the companion of his flight, should an opportunity for doing so present itself. Nay, even in their present position, it was indispensable. It was attended, indeed, with considerable risk; but existing circumstances admitted of no alternative. Adèle must consent to become his wife. By uniting her fate with his in the sacred bonds of marriage, she would invest him with the legal privileges of her protector, and would enable him to claim her as his own, in defiance of the threats of those who might seek to tear her from him. With gentle persuasion De Clermont unfolded his wishes to his beautiful companion, as, seated beside him, she discussed the never-ending theme of a future home and future happiness; and was forced, at its conclusion, to acknowledge, with a bitter sigh, how distant and precarious was the prospect of either.

"But all places are alike with you, Alphonse," she said, smiling through her tears. "Even in this wretched apartment, how much, much happier am I, than when surrounded by all the luxuries of Audenach."

"But we cannot long remain here, dearest," said De Clermont; "nor would it be fitting that we should. My thoughts are perpetually busied in seeking for you a more suitable asylum."

"But you have said that here only can we hope for safety," said Adèle; "why, then, should we seek another home?"

"We are safe, Adèle," said De Clermont," only so long as our retreat remains undiscovered." He paused. "Are you able, dearest, to listen to what I would propose," he continued tenderly, observing that the colour had faded from her cheek.

Adèle was always ready to listen to *his* words, and De Clermont took advantage of the moment to set before her the expediency of their immediate union, and to win her consent that Félix should, without delay, be entrusted with the difficult task of making the necessary arrangements for it.

"Let me but call you mine, Adèle, said De Clermont—give me but the right to be your protector, and the united world shall not tear you from me."

On that very evening the anticipated change in the fortunes of his beautiful foster-sister was made known to the gratified ears of Félix Noel, and De Clermont passed a considerable time in consultation with his devoted attendant upon the mode of effecting it least likely to excite suspicion.

"I must consult with Marie," said Félix, "for she is more skilled in these matters than myself;" and accordingly he sought out the abode of the fortune-teller, who had of late been so busied in the progress of public affairs, that she had wholly absented herself from the retreat of the Heiress of Audenach.

Félix could scarcely have applied to a more fitting coadjutor. Marie de Théricourt, the noted fortune-teller, was too well known to the authorities as one of their most zealous adherents, for any of her

measures to excite suspicion. She boldly presented herself before a civil magistrate, and requested him to accompany her to legalize a marriage contract, since, as she affirmed, the young woman, who was one of the principal parties concerned, was prevented by indisposition from attending in person at the *mairie*.

Whether the worthy magistrate was induced by any private consideration to comply with the request of his singular petitioner, does not appear. Possibly, Marie was too well known to him to excite his suspicions; or, perhaps, some spark of pity, or other kindly feeling, induced him to pass over in silence whatever surmises presented themselves to his mind on the subject of her request. Be that as it may, certain it is that he accompanied the fortune-teller to the humble retreat of the lovers, and that the names of Alphonse de Clermont, and of Adèle de St. Croix, were subscribed in his presence, without comment.

Within an hour after his departure, the venerable priest, who had been induced by the persuasions of Félix to perform the religious part of the service, entered the apartment. It was a strange scene, that marriage ceremony, in which two of the best and noblest of the land were about to pronounce the solemn vows that would for ever unite their almost hopeless fate. The fine form and noble bearing of Alphonse de Clermont, and the exquisite grace and beauty of the fair girl who leaned tremblingly on his arm for support, while in a faint voice she pronounced

the words prescribed for the occasion, formed a strange contrast to the wretched apartment which was now their only tenement—to the singular figure of Marie de Théricourt, and the peasant's mien and garb of Félix Noel, who stood—the only attendants on the bridal of the noble Alphonse, Count de Clermont, and of the lovely Adèle de St. Croix, the once Heiress of Audenach !

With a solemn voice the priest proceeded to read the marriage service, while De Clermont tenderly supported the almost-sinking form of his bride, for Adèle's strength was well nigh exhausted with the previous exertion of the morning. As the venerable old man pronounced the nuptial benediction, the youthful pair continued kneeling before him. When he had concluded, Alphonse rose, and stood for a moment gazing on Adèle, who still retained her kneeling position. Never had she appeared to him so lovely or so beloved, as that moment, when he might at last call her indeed his own ! The sorrows they had shared, and shared, too, for each other, had blanched her cheek to a marble paleness, giving to her exquisitely-chiselled features a loveliness almost unearthly ! As she knelt, her hands meekly folded on her bosom—the pure white robe her sole bridal adornment—her long clustering tresses the only veil that shaded that fair brow—a sculptor might have chosen her for his model of a seraph kneeling in intercession before the Throne of Mercy ! There was a silence of some minutes, for none seemed

inclined to interrupt the gentle suppliant's voiceless prayer to Heaven for its blessing and support. The old man was the first to speak. "Rise, my child," he at last said; "and may God receive and sanctify thy petition."

Still Adèle moved not. Alphonse bent one knee to the ground, beside her, and encircled the form of his beloved with the arm which was henceforth to be her stay through life. He attempted to raise her, but Adèle seconded not the effort. Her head fell back upon his shoulder; the rich clusters of dark hair parted on her pallid brow. Once she unclosed her eyes, and having first raised them towards Heaven, then fixed them on the countenance of her lover with an expression of unutterable tenderness. Another moment—and the lids had fallen. In the act of prayer—in the attitude of devotion—her pure spirit had fled for ever!

CHAPTER XXXIX.

“O death ! where art thou ? Death thou dread of guilt,
Thou wish of innocence, affliction’s friend,
Tir’d nature calls thee ; come, in mercy come,
And lay me pillow’d in eternal rest.”

Grecian Daughter.

MORE than a year and a half had passed away, since the events recorded in the last chapter had occurred, and the streets of the city of Paris were once more thronged with a countless multitude, whose every passion seemed condensed into the intense and all absorbing anticipation of some spectacle with which they were about to be recreated. Detachments of the National Guard lined the streets, and with some difficulty restrained the impetuosity of the rabble, so as to preserve a free passage in the midst for the march of the expected procession, while every window and balcony, and even the tops of the houses near which it was to pass, were equally crowded with spectators.

At length, the acclamations of the more distant portion of the populace, announced that the cavalcade had commenced its march, and every eye was strained in eager excitement to catch the first glimpse of its approach. It was headed by a body of the National Guard, in sufficient force to check any ebullition of popular fury against the unhappy persons who were now the engrossing object of public curiosity. They followed amid the hootings and execrations of the very people, who, but a few months previously, would have knelt to lick the very dust beneath their feet.

The prisoners, (for such they were,) to the number of one hundred and five, were placed in low hurdles, trailing on the ground. In the first of these, the livid countenance of the ferocious Robespierre was now scarce distinguishable. He had attempted to evade the just punishment of his misdeeds, by the commission of suicide; but the instrument of destruction had but increased his bodily torments, without ridding him of a life forfeited to his country. His jaw was frightfully lacerated, and the linen cloth in which it was bound up was stained and dripping with blood! By his side sat his confederate, the young Jacobin D'Orville, his fine form and Roman features now stern and unmoved, beneath his inevitable fate, forming a striking contrast to those of his trembling and puny companion. Beyond, again, was the cowering fear-stricken figure of the Deputy St. Croix—each sat silent and motionless.

Immediately following, were others, less notorious indeed, for their crimes but scarce less deserving of punishment. These appeared desirous, by the unconcerned tone of their manners and conversation, to testify their indifference to the awful business of the moment.

"Our *avant couriers* are paying unusual homage to the Goddess of Silence," said one.

"Only rehearsing for the forthcoming tragedy," answered Fabre d'Eglantine the poet, who was one of the wretched trio.

"*Tu as tort mon ami,*" replied his companion, with hideous levity, "*puis qu'ils vont faire ce que tu as fait toute ta vie.*"

"*Quoi donc ?*"

"*Des vers !*" and the witty rejoinder was answered by the laugh of the condemned, and by expressions of disgust and contumely from the surrounding multitude.*

At length, the mournful procession reached the *Place de Grève*, which so often, at the beck of these very criminals, had resounded with the cry of "*à la Lanterne,*" and where a scaffold had been erected for the present occasion, in front of the Hotel de Ville. The square was thronged to suffocation, and every window of every house by which it was surrounded was crowded with females—aye, females of the better class, who had eagerly paid the exorbitant price demanded for the privilege of witnessing the gory spectacle.

* Historical.

It was against Robespierre, that the rage of the populace was most particularly directed. He was assailed on all sides with words of loathing at his crimes, and of joy at the penalty about to be inflicted on them.

"Go, monster," exclaimed a parentless girl, as he reached the fatal spot; "Descend into the tomb, and bear with thee the curses of the widow and the orphan!"

"And thou, Lord of Audenach!" exclaimed the loud voice of one, whose tall figure and singular appearance marked her as the notorious Marie de Théricourt. She had planted herself at the very foot of the scaffold, and now stood in an attitude of defiance, her arm extended, and her eyes gleaming with the fiendish exultation of gratified revenge. The unhappy St. Croix had turned as she addressed him.

"Aye, turn thee, and hearken, while I tell the noble names by which thy deeds shall be inscribed upon the page of history. The Lord of Audenach! Baron de St. Croix! The people's friend! The chosen associate of the worthy Robespierre!" She paused an instant; then fixing her eagle glance upon the quivering countenance of the unhappy criminal, added—"The murderer of thy wronged, thy spotless daughter!—and last, and best of all, the spurned victim, the abject slave of Marie de Théricourt!"

The unfortunate Lord of Audenach had already mounted the fatal steps when she had ceased to speak,—a few moments more, and amid the hootings

and execrations of the multitude, his miserable existence had terminated !

It was some hours later, that an order was transmitted to the governor of the prison of the Abbaye, for the release of certain persons confined there under various accusations by command of the late government. Among the prisoners to whom the gifts of life and freedom were thus communicated, there was but one to whom the unhopèd-for intelligence appeared to convey no sensation of pleasure. As the door of his narrow cell opened to admit the gaoler and his attendant in the performance of their errand of mercy, the prisoner was seated by a small deal table, which, with a single chair and a straw pallet, constituted its whole furniture. His head was resting on his hand, and so wholly were his thoughts absorbed, that the intruder had thrice spoken the words of deliverance, ere they reached the mental hearing of him to whom they were addressed. At length, he raised his head, but as he did so, the agony of countenance, and the bitter sigh which accompanied the movement, told plainly that to him at least, the gifts of life and liberty were valueless—that the blessed visions of other days, and other scenes,—past—gone, alas ! for ever, were sweeter in their momentary forgetfulness of the present, than any reality which earth could now bestow !

The prisoner rose, and without uttering a syllable, took the paper containing the order for his liberation from the hands of the gaoler. The man muttered a few words of gratulation, in which sundry

hints were mingled, tending to quicken the generosity of the listener. Casting down the few coins which the rapacity of his persecutors had left him, and passing in silence along the dark stone passages of his prison house, the released prisoner in a few moments found himself beyond its walls.

Where was the home to which *he* should bend his steps? Where the smile of welcome—or the words of joy—or the endearments of affection with which *his* return would be greeted? He traversed the bridge, so often trodden in happier days with the light foot of hope and joy. He stood beside the Hotel Clermont!—Where was the home—the cherished home of his childhood—the scene of all his earliest recollections? It had been sold as the confiscated property of an accused—the noble mansion had been split into three separate tenements. Its lower apartments now glittered with all the varied *minutiæ* of a *Magazin de Nouveautés*; and from the upper windows, stuffs of the most flaunting, gaudy colours, now flared in hideous mockery, notifying what wares could be purchased within!

The wanderer turned away in bitter anguish. He could not bear the gaze upon that scene! Again he traversed the well known bridge—with uncertain steps he pursued his weary way, and now—he stood beside the Hotel Beaumont! Its shutters were closed—many of its windows were broken,—and in one casement—one, on which the wanderer could not trust his gaze, fraught as it was with a thousand

agonizing recollections, the swallow had built her nest, and the spider had woven his web amid the desolation !

Again, a little while, and the hasty steps of the wanderer had carried him far off to a remote part of the city, to other—far other scenes. Alphonse de Clermont stood once more beside the narrow mound where reposed the earthly remains of Adèle de St. Croix ! Months of sickness—months of captivity had passed away, since last he visited that cherished spot ; but the grass was still green and carefully tended, and a fresh gathered garland was laid upon the lowly tomb !

Let us draw a veil over those hours of anguish—let us not seek to penetrate the depths of his agony, while De Clermont vainly strove to tear himself from the hallowed resting place of his beloved. The evening shadows were already deepening—yet still the mourner moved not.

“ Pardon, Monsieur,” said the guardian of the place with some show of feeling, as he looked on the intense agony of De Clermont’s countenance. “ We are commanded to close the gates at sunset.”

“ One moment,” gasped De Clermont ; and in compassion to his evident suffering, the attendant withdrew.

“ Adèle ! my own ! my lost ! my best beloved ! for a brief season—Farewell ! Farewell !” he murmured, as kneeling beside the little mound, the mourner bent his head downwards to the green grass which waved above it.

Then rising—and without venturing to cast one look behind—he turned away and quitted the spot—for ever!

* * * * *

In the history of the war of La Vendée, we find the illustrious name of De Clermont among the records of the slain, while fighting with desperate valour in the cause of the exiled Bourbons. His remains have—since the Restoration, been removed to the cemetery of Montmartre, where, in compliance with his last wishes, they repose beside those of Adèle de St. Croix. No gorgeous monument marks the spot. No weeping relatives attend to pay the last tribute of affection to the departed. But one grey headed old man still cherishes the remembrance of his hapless foster-sister—still—even to this day—with unwearying affection does he fulfil his daily task of tending the flowers which his care has planted, and of removing every weed from the humble sod which covers the remains of the noble-minded Alphonse de Clermont, and the beautiful and unfortunate Adèle de St. Croix.

THE END.

ERRATA.

- Page 6, line 3, *for an read* and
 — „ — 5, *for preceded read* preceded it
 — 16, — 4, *for in death read* is death
 — 41, — 17, *after father's read* fervent
 — 43, — 12, *after trackless read* dreary
 — 46, — last, *for pleasing read* pleasant
 — 49, — 25, *for left a trace read* left a single trace
 — 50, — 20, *for these read* those
 — 59, — 8, *for out read* on it
 — 65, — 8, *for wordly read* worldly
 — 84, — 28, *for wil read* will
 — 140, — 4, *for imitate read* imitates
 — 149, — 29, *after do read* you doubt
 — 151, — 5, *for away read* way
 — 154, — 6, *for As he had read* As he
 — 165, — 8, *for a read* an
 — 181, — 26, *after apology read* from him
 — 187, — 19, *for brought read* wrought
 — 219, — 23, *before Adèle read* but
 — 221, — 26, *after I read* to
 — 269, — 1, *for shalt read* shall
 — 343, — 19, *after as read* at
 — 350, — 24, *for the read* to



